Organising against appropriation. How self-employed workers in the creative industries make things work

Cnossen, Boukje

Publication date:
2018

Document Version
Publisher's PDF, also known as Version of record

Organising Against Appropriation

How Self-Employed Workers in the Creative Industries Make Things Work

BOUKJE CNOSSEN

TILBURG UNIVERSITY

Organising Against Appropriation

How Independent Workers in the Creative Industries Make Things Work

BOUKJE CNOSSEN

Tuesday, January 16th 2018

Printed by: Prisma Print
Design & Lay-out: Studio Teekens, www.studioteekens.nl

Organising Against Appropriation
How Self-Employed Workers
in the Creative Industries
Make Things Work

Proefschrift ter verkrijging van de graad van doctor
aan Tilburg University
op gezag van de rector magnificus,
prof. dr. E.H.L. Aarts,
in het openbaar te verdedigen ten overstaan van een
door het college voor promoties aangewezen commissie
in de aula van de Universiteit

op dinsdag 16 januari 2018 om 16.00 uur

door

Boukje Sanne Cnossen
geboren op 31 augustus 1987 te 's-Hertogenbosch.

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I gratefully acknowledge the financial contributions of the Nederlandse Organisatie voor Wetenschappelijk Onderzoek [grant number 407-12-008] and the Kunstenbond.

To Eric.

Acknowledgements

I feel honoured to have been given the chance to write a dissertation, and wish to acknowledge those who have helped me make this possible. First and foremost, I am indebted to my supervisors Arjen van Witteloostuijn and Viviane Sergi for their excellent guidance. Arjen, thank you for your support, your help in navigating theories and framings, and your trust in my abilities. No matter how much I doubted sometimes, I always left our meetings feeling that I might be able to pull it off after all. I learned a lot from working with you.

Viviane, your role as a supervisor really took shape during my stay in Montreal. I could not be more grateful for your involvement and want to thank you for the great guidance you have provided in working my way through new concepts, becoming acquainted with CCO, and your help in making sense of my empirical material. You taught me so much and I look forward to our continued collaboration.

I would also like to thank the members of the jury, Mark van Vuuren, Arjan van den Born, Tal Simons, Barbara Czarniawska, and Niels Noorderhaven, for providing feedback that was helpful and challenging at the same time. I am very grateful for the advice you provided and am certain I will continue to benefit from the insights you provided me with in the final stages of writing.

My research was facilitated through the NWO research project High Performance in the Networked Industry, which was made possible by Arjan van den Born and Arjen van Witteloostuijn. I want to thank my fellow team members, Richard Haans, Anne Spanjer, Tim de Leeuw and Pourya Darnihamedani, for the pleasant collaboration. In the final year, Koen van Vliet and Jozien Wijkhuis have helped share my findings with a broader audience. I also want to thank Margarita Osipian and Mariëlle Verdijk for their help copy editing the dissertation, and Studio Teekens for their design work.

I am very much indebted to the people and organisations I studied for this dissertation. The people from Urban Resort, Fenix, and Stichting Broedstraten have given me access to their spaces, members and knowledge, and provided me with great questions and insights. The artists and creative professionals I met through these organisations have generously shared their time and thoughts during my fieldwork.

Spending a semester at the Management School of the Université du Québec à Montréal (UQÀM) has had a major impact on my dissertation. This stay was made possible by Viviane Sergi and Chahrazad Abdallah, who made me feel welcome, introduced me to many great researchers, and made sure I could join great research seminars. Chahrazad, thank you for your ideas, advice, and our ongoing collaboration. Kerstin Kuyken, I could not have wished for a better office mate than you. I benefitted from exchanges with researchers at the University of Montreal and UQÀM such as François Cooren, Boris Brummans, Consuelo Vásquez, Daniel Robichaud, Christoph Haug, Olivier Germain, and Anne-Laure Saives. Joëlle Basque, Maude Gauthier, Annie Paulin, Benjamin Gagnon Chainey, Sophie Del Fa, and Alaric Bourgoin enlivened my stay. I am particularly grateful to Nicolas Bencherki, who asked me to start our – now annual - Space, Creativity, and Organising workshop, introduced me to CCO, and became a fantastic co-author and friend.

In line with the ideas I defend in this dissertation, I would argue that a PhD is merely a temporarily stabilised outcome of a much larger web of ongoing processes and practices. Being a PhD student at Tilburg University gave me the support and flexibility to write other papers which did not end up in this dissertation, organise research events, and build up a network of fellow researchers across universities and institutions. I want to thank Erwin Dekker, Lotte Hemme, Ruben Jacobs, Sofie Jacobs, Vera de Jong, Ellen Loots, Claartje Rasterhoff, Ieva Rozentale, and Yosha Wijngaarden of research collective Vizier for our stimulating exchanges and collaborations during these past years. I also want to thank Katie Stephenson for setting up the Research Group Collaborative Spaces (RGCS) Amsterdam with me, as well as for accepting to be my paranymph. I am also grateful to the participants in the RGCS events we have organised so far, and to François-Xavier de Vaujany, Julie Fabbri, and others, for providing the international framework of which it is part. It has been a pleasure to work with Lena Knappert, Ellen Loots, Eliel Markman, Sebastian Olma, and Tanja Sihvonen on past and current writing projects that informed this dissertation. Arjan Markus, Ana Aranda, and Yuval Engel kindly offered their help during my job search. I have had the honour of acting as an external supervisor for the master theses of Branka Lončarić and Bram van Bindsbergen, from which I learned a great deal. Finally, I want to thank Timon Beyes and Dennis Schoeneborn for offering me the opportunity to continue my research working with them.

At the Tilburg campus, I enjoyed the company of fellow PhD students and other colleagues. I thank Roland van de Kerkhof, Feng Fang, Koen van den Oever, Tao Han, Yasir Dewan, Ruud Sneep, Vilma Chila, Jacob Derks, Constant Pieters, Joeri van Hugten, Yan Wang, Joshua Eckblad, Saraï Sapulete, Peter Snoeren, Cha Li, Takumin Wang, Panos Chasapopoulous and Divina Alexiou for the great exchanges and moral support. In my final year, my new office mates Vera Leijtens and Valeriya Atrokhova made the final stretch of writing more pleasant. During this time, I was able to learn about grant proposal writing from Merlijn van Hulst and Ilse Souhail. I am also grateful for the support provided by Nicole van de Ven, Elvira van Vliet, and Mirjam Pennings in planning my (pre-)defence, and the CentER graduate office for their support towards completing the dissertation.

I cannot imagine completing this dissertation without the support of my friends, who have offered inspiration and distraction, each in their unique ways. Macha Rousakov, Julia Jansen, Gemma van der Westen, Enny van Arkel, Eefje van Doorn, Suzanne Schut, Nina Jongkind, Chris van Dorp, Arjan de Jong, Doreen Wittenbols, Dave Sevenoaks, Marijke Eckhardt, Sara Custer, Julie Hornbek Thoft, Christos Philippou, Hubertus Mayr, Lucy van de Wiel, Lonneke van Heugten, Thomas Franssen, Michaël Deinema, Femke Truijens, Ilse Nieuwland, Sander Borgert and Sylvia Giezeman, thank you for your support and the great times. Céline Maessen, thank you for being a fantasstic friend and accepting to be my paranymph. My friends from the Stedelijk Gymnasium 's-Hertogenbosch, specifically Gwendolyn Maas, Maaike Witlox, Sanne van Rooij, and Nina Dekker, continue to remind me of how silly we used to be, and still are. David and Saskia Meijer, I have felt your support on and off the yoga mat. I specifically want to thank the ACTA community, and in particular my immediate neighbours Femke Melief-Janssen, Erin Tjin A Ton, and Gosia Kaczmarek, for their pleasant company and continuing interest in my research. Thank you Anastasia Kostner, for our shared yoga adventures. I also cherish the memories of Julien Haffmans and Mathilde Forissier, who each impacted my research journey in their own way.

I also want to thank my family – aunts, uncles, and cousins – as well as my not-yet-family-in-law, for showing their interest and support. My almost 93-year old grandmother, or 'beppe', inspires me to be as strong and problem-solving as she is. I am very grateful for Riet van der Lee's continued presence in my life. I thank my

sister Hester for reminding me of all the other things that are important, and for making fun of what she sees as my self-chosen path of torture. Most of all, I want to acknowledge my parents, Jens and Annelies, who have facilitated me in every way they could during these past four years, from fixing me up with a bicycle and fluorescent running gear, to picking me up and cooking me dinner. Working at Tilburg University meant a long commute, and staying in my parental home in Vlijmen from time to time – and especially in my final year – allowed me to spend my time more effectively.

Finally, it is a sad fact that the person who is most important to me is the person who has had to suffer most from my dissertation writing. Eric, thank you for enduring how this project sometimes absorbed all my time, for giving me some perspective whenever I felt stressed out, for making me laugh and for, well, everything.

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Introduction
Self-Employed Workers in the Creative Industries

1.1 Introduction

Although it is known that larger firms have several advantages when it comes to operating in competitive markets (Van Witteloostuijn & Boone, 2006), western economies have a growing number of one-person firms or individual entrepreneurs (Grugulis & Stoyanova, 2011; Cappelli & Keller, 2013). This creates new relevance for the question of how self-employed workers can organise themselves to capture some of the benefits that come with being part of an organisation. I look at this question by using three qualitative case studies, each zooming in on a particular setting where self-employed workers share space, and/or work on temporary projects together. My interest in this phenomenon is driven by the larger of question of what it is that makes people come together and start organising, but the more specific research question this dissertation addresses is: how is organising between self-employed workers in the creative industries, working in shared spaces, shaped by material and discursive practices?

In examining this, I engage with a range of theoretical lenses, draw on a variety of methods, and use different sets of empirical material. Nevertheless, all the essays start from a practice-based approach to organising (Weick, 1979; Czarniawska, 2005; 2009b; 2011) and borrow from literature on work in the creative and cultural industries across disciplines, such as sociology, anthropology, and management. In section 1.4 I present the key concepts I took from this literature and discuss how these relate to the wider field of organisation studies, in which I position this study. Although I present a theoretical framework and methodological approach in each empirical chapter, I will briefly outline some commonalities between the theoretical approaches. However, before I do so, I will provide a concise overview of what has been studied in relation to the organisation of creative work, after which I will move on to show how my dissertation contributes to this knowledge.

1.2 Studying Creativity and Creative Work: Where to Look and How?

Scholars of management and organisation are increasingly interested in the organisation of the creative and cultural industries (e.g. Lampel, Lant, & Shamsie, 2000; Jones, Svejenova, & Strandgaard, 2016). There are several reasons for this increased interest. In the first place, national and regional governments all over the world invest in the creative and cultural industries[1] in order to trigger economic growth (Cooke & Lazzaretti, 2008; Stam, De Jong, & Marlet 2008; Jin et al., 2014; Lee, 2014; Rozentale, 2014), hence supporting research into the effects of such investments is worthwhile. Much of this research fosters dialogue between scholars from different disciplines. The questions at the heart of these studies vary, but are mostly aimed at exploring the workings of policies and investments in creative and cultural clusters, programmes, or hubs (e.g. Kalandides, Stöber, & Mieg, 2008; Peck, 2012; Comunian & Mould, 2014; Lange, Mould, & Comunian, 2015).

Another stream of research looks at the phenomenon of creativity in the context of entrepreneurship and innovation (Dino, 2015). Creativity is defined as the ability to generate novel ideas (Barron & Harrington, 1981), but in the context of management and organisation studies those new and original ideas also have to be useful, so that they may impact business (Amabile, 1997; Amabile & Pratt, 2016). Hence, organisation scholars have studied the distinction between, and complementarity of, creative talent and entrepreneurial skills (Lampel, Lant, & Shamsie, 2000; Reid &

[1] I use the terms 'creative industries', 'cultural industries', 'creative sector', and 'cultural sector' interchangeably. For an overview of how these terms relate see O'Connor (2010).

Karambayya, 2009; Townley & Beech, 2010; Bhansing, Leenders, & Wijnberg, 2012). How exactly artistic creativity and entrepreneurial success are related has been the topic of extensive research (e.g. Jones et al., 2012; Jones, Svejenova, & Strandgaard, 2016), but many of these studies start from a definition of creativity or creative skills that is cognitive, meaning located in the mind of the individual. Creativity is then seen as a characteristic or a competence that one possesses to lesser or greater extent, a viewpoint which ignores that the recognition of creative talent is itself embedded in practice (Fisher, 2017).

On the other spectrum of studies on creative work and how this is organised, creativity is studied not as a cognitive phenomenon but as a discursive vehicle, tightly hitched to other terms surrounding creative and cultural production, such as passion (Tokumitsu, 2015) and play (Sørenson & Spoelstra, 2012). Much of this research argues that economies are increasingly governed by values that were previously reserved for the arts or intellectual pursuit. One of the starting points for this observation is found in Deleuze and Guattari's *Mille Plateaux* (1980), in which they argued that the creative activities of companies – marketing, research and development, public relations – were becoming much more important than the actual manufacturing of products. Another influential work in the same tradition was *Economies of Signs and Space*, observing the emergence of a 'disorganised capitalism', which is characterised by an aesthetic awareness, in which what is increasingly produced are not material objects, but signs' (Lash & Urry, 1994: 15).

This work has since been followed up by a vast and varied stream of research looking at the relationship between artistic or creative work and contemporary capitalism, often drawing attention to the inequalities that the intricate links between the two (re)produce (e.g. Lazzarato, 2004; Entwistle & Wissinger, 2006; Gill & Pratt, 2008; Larner & Molloy, 2009; Kunst, 2012; Papastergiadis, 2014; Conor, Gill, & Taylor, 2015). For example, the omnipresent imperative to be creative has caused scholars to draw attention to the impact this discourse has on solo-entrepreneurs in the creative industries (Jeanes, 2006; Gielen, 2013; Bilton, 2015; McRobbie, 2015). The promise of a creative yet precarious life, in which passion makes up for the lack of financial and social security, has been said to motivate people to give up social security (McRobbie, 2015; Tokumitsu, 2015).

Although this scholarship is mostly situated in cultural studies and sociology, the arguments which are articulated there are relevant for the field of organisation studies, given that they concern systems of economic production and the organisation this requires. Indeed, management scholars are now starting to look at the current changes in the nature of work, with phenomena such as the gig economy and

contingent work (Barley, Bechky, & Milliken, 2017), and how this relates to the values since long propagated in the creative industries (Endrissat, Kärreman, & Noppeney, 2016). As a result of decreased public funding for the arts in various countries, and the emergence of platforms for financing art such as crowd funding (Alexander & Bowler, 2014), independent workers in the arts are often cast as examples of entrepreneurs (Stahl, 2008; Lange, 2009; Scott, 2012; Loacker, 2013). Hence, the organisational aspects of the creative industries are often seen as forecasters of changes in other sectors, and the strategies that workers in the creative industries employ to deal with their circumstances are taken as inspiration for workers in other sectors (Eikhof & Haunschild, 2006).

Approaching creativity neither as an isolated personality trait, nor as an imperative concealing a political agenda, I propose to understand creativity not as a fixed phenomenon, but rather as an outcome of the contexts and systems which give it meaning and value. This does not mean that creativity is not real, rather it means that its 'realness' is dependent on practices and contexts that help recognise it, such as auditions, reviews, and pitches. As a result, selection mechanisms in place for recognising quality, potential, or excellence, also lead to unequal representation in terms of gender diversity and ethnic diversity (Banks, 2017).

Thus, although it is possible to study creativity, I would argue that the phenomenon must always be approached as situated, constructed, and shared between actors. Following Eikhof and Haunschild (2007), I suggest that in order to better understand how creative work is organised we must look at the situated practices of actors performing such work. While my theoretical and methodological approach differs highly from the standard approaches in the literature on creativity and entrepreneurship, scholars in this field have also expressed the need for awareness of how creativity is context-specific and the result of interactions (Sawyer, 2007; Ivcevic, 2009), a call which, in its principle, is compatible with a practice-based approach. Likewise, entrepreneurship scholars have recently taken up practice theory in order to address the rationalistic bias in their field (Johannisson, 2011). Although the studies in this dissertation are not situated in entrepreneurship research, my theoretical approach broadly aligns with entrepreneurship-as-practice research (e.g. De Clerq & Voronov, 2009; Chalmers & Shaw, 2015).

1.3 A Practice-Based Approach

To study practices on a micro-level does not mean turning away from macro-level concerns, since, in line with actor-network theory's denial of any *a priori* distinction

between micro and macro (Latour, 2005), any use of the terms micro and macro is a qualification of focus, not a claim of reality. Rather, taking this research approach means zooming in on particular moments of organising, only to be able to zoom out again and show how these moments interlink. This conceptualisation of interlinking practices is inspired by Czarniawska's notion of action nets (2004), as well as by the call for 'taller and flatter ontologies' where practice-focused research is concerned (Seidl & Whittington, 2014).

The focus on practices is to be situated within recent organisational scholarship that has revisited different lineages of practice theory (e.g. Reckwitz, 2002; Schatzki, 2005; Feldman & Orlikowski, 2011; Nicolini, 2012). I borrow from Schatzki the understanding that 'the site of social life is composed of a nexus of human practices and material arrangements' (2005: 465). Practice theorists, or scholars who work with what Schatzki calls a 'social ontology', see actions as neither constructed from individuals' actions, beliefs, and ideas (agency-before-structure), nor as a result of overarching societal structures (structure-before-agency) (ibid: 466). According to this view, practices are more than empirical phenomena; they are the ontological building blocks of social structures such as organisations. Practices are also not the same as actions, they are meaningful within a context and give meaning to the context at the same time. In the words of Nicolini, practice is an 'open-ended, heterogeneous accomplishment that takes place within a specific horizon of sense and a set of concerns which the practice itself brings to bear' (2009: 1391).

In order to understand the link between practices and the social reality that they make up, Nicolini proposes a methodology of zooming in and zooming out through different theoretical lenses that may be employed simultaneously (ibid). Zooming in can entail, among other things, a focus on 'sayings and doings', on 'the active role of material elements and infrastructures', or on a process of socialisation. Zooming out can mean an articulation of 'associations between practices and the resulting practice-net' (ibid: 1412), an account of 'how one practice becomes the resource for other ones' or of 'the effects of the global on the local' (ibid). In order to zoom out, practice has to be conceptualised as consequential for the production of social life (Feldman & Orlikowksi, 2011). In the context of this dissertation, I will look at practices as they are consequential for organising. Such a focus allows for a detailed analysis of what is going on in a local and specific setting, while taking into account that these practices can have meaning and impact beyond this setting. Thus, I define practices as constitutive of organising, which in turn can lead to the emergence of an organisation (Taylor & Van Every, 2011). In the following section, I expand on these concepts and the ways in which they relate to one another.

1.4 Organisation(s), Organising, and Practices: Key Concepts and Definitions

Drawing our attention again to the specific empirical setting at hand, it has been argued that there are unique qualities in the ways in which those working in the creative industries organise themselves (Jones, Lorenzen, & Sapsed, 2015). Examples of such organising practices are the platforms where artists present their work to audiences (Alexander & Bowler, 2014), new collaborative formats such as hackathons (Trupia, 2016), the changing position of the arts in education (Van den Born, Van den Oord, & Van Witteloostuijn, 2016), and cross-sector partnerships (Lindkvist & Hjorth, 2015). Physical places, often called co-working spaces or creative hubs, have emerged to bring individual workers together and stimulate collaboration and innovation (Salovaara, 2015; Gandini, 2015; Kingma, 2016). Research has focused on the role of these places in urban renewal processes (Markusen & Gadwa, 2010; Peck, 2012; Uitermark & Bosker, 2014) as well as, increasingly, the social dynamics inside those places (e.g. Spinuzzi, 2012; Garrett et al., 2017). Furthermore, organising practices in the creative industries often take place in communities and networks (Grugulis & Stoyanova, 2011; 2012) that are characterised by the ambiguous starting and stopping points of cultural projects (Lindkvist & Hjorth, 2015) and the co-existence of entrepreneurial endeavours with artistic or creative processes (Hjorth, Holt, & Steyaert, 2015; Verduyn, 2015).

These phenomena challenge the conceptions we have about what organisations are. As Czarniawska (2008; 2013) explains, organisation theory is heavily indebted to systems theory, which draws a distinction between the entity that the organisation is on the one hand, and the environment in which it tries to function, on the other. Systems theory provided a nice middle ground between two previously held opposing views of organisation – Taylorism and administration science – and provided researchers with the adjective 'organisational' when thinking about the phenomena they studied (Czarniawska, 2008: 5). Showing the performativity of systems theory, Czarniawska (2013: 8) points out how the foundational organisational theorists March and Simon first refused to offer a definition of organisations but then claimed organisations were 'systems of coordinated action' in the second edition of their seminal work (March & Simon, 1993: 2). Systems theory has marked organisation theory ever since (Czarniawska, 2013: 5) and conceptualising the organisation as an entity is also present in the etymology of the often-used 'firm' (e.g. Cyert & March, 1963).

However, the boundary-spanning or boundary-defying phenomena cited above have been challenging such entity-based views of the organisation to a large extent (Czarniawksa, 2013). This has resulted in organisation scholars focusing on other

phenomena, such as institutions and networks (Ahrne & Brunsson, 2011), but it has also given rise to the argument that our object of inquiry should be not organisations, but organising (Weick, 1979), i.e. the study of 'what people do when they act collectively in order to achieve something' (Czarniawska, 2008: 5). The focus on organising has further developed in different research streams such as the practice-turn (Reckwitz, 2002; Schatzki, 2005; Feldman & Orlikowski, 2011; Nicolini, 2012) and process studies (Tsoukas & Chia, 2002; Langley, 2007; Langley et al., 2013; Helin et al., 2014). Whereas the practice-based approach entails a methodological focus, the processual view – especially what has become known as the 'strong view' (Langley et al., 2013) – offers indeed a new theory of organisations, which states that organisations are reifications of temporary processes.

While this may be true, our world is still inhabited by organisations which act, in the sense that human actors are acting on behalf of them. Claiming that such organisational entities – universities, departments, companies – are nothing but temporary mirages, as the processual view stipulates, does not do justice to the impact and agency that organisations have in everyday life. The theoretical perspective known as the communicative constitution of organisations (CCO) (Blaschke, Schoeneborn, & Seidl, 2012; Schoeneborn et al., 2014) has proposed a way to perceive of organising and organisation as outcomes of collective and social processes, while also accounting for the fact that there often exists something like an organisational actor that can act, or rather make others act, on its behalf.

Nicotera (2013), for instance, argues that CCO research has emphasised what organisations can do (organisational agency) at the expense of asking what the organisation *is* (Nicotera, 2013). An answer to the question of the definition of organisations was formulated by Taylor, who argued that 'taking a communicative view, an organization is both a configuring of practices […] and a corporate legal person whose "voice" becomes, paradoxically, a component of that same discursive geography' (2011: 1273). Within CCO, various concepts have been articulated to theorise this discursive (and dynamic) geography, such as presentification (Benoit-Barné & Cooren, 2009), ventriloquism (Cooren, 2010; Wilhoit, 2016), hybrid agency (Cooren, 2006), and thirdness (Taylor & Van Every, 2011).

In this dissertation, I adopt a CCO-inspired view of organisation and organising, meaning that I understand organisations as temporary results of communicative practices which can nonetheless, through such practices, perform as actors. Throughout the empirical chapters, I explore such practices in the creative industries in the context of two creative spaces and a network-like organisation of community artists in Amsterdam. I investigate to what extent these collectives display what

Dobusch and Schoeneborn (2015) call 'organisationality', and if, and how, their configuring of practices (Taylor, 2011) results in thirdness (Taylor & Van Every, 2011), in the sense of an (emergent) organisation.

The creative spaces in Chapters 2 and 3 are mostly used by self-employed workers who interact and collaborate with certain purposes in mind, and where some activity coordination and institutional positioning (Sillince, 2010) took place. In Chapter 4, the focal organisation, a 'corporate legal person' (Taylor, 2011), seemed to continuously expand and contract depending on the strategic interests of including or excluding affiliated cultural workers, participants, and volunteers. Hence, each chapter in its own way investigates the practices that contributed to such organising, as well as whether an organisation, in the sense of an entitative being (Nicotera, 2013), was constituted. As such, this dissertation aims to address how organising emerges and lasts in a setting that facilitates and shapes certain aspects of the professional lives of these independent workers, while leaving aside (most parts of) the core of their profession: artistic and creative production. A creative space can organise a festival, but the art which is showcased there is never fully attributed to said creative space. I will suggest that it is this selective appropriation that makes these modes of organising able to endure despite their obvious precariousness.

1.5 Outline of the Current Study

Although the concepts used in each study will be introduced more precisely in the different chapters, a few general remarks on the commonalities and differences between the chapters can be made here. Most of the theoretical inspiration for this dissertation is taken from actor-network theory (ANT) (Latour, 2005; Mol, 2010; Muniesa, 2015) and the aforementioned research framework known as CCO (Blaschke, Schoeneborn, & Seidl, 2012; Schoeneborn et al., 2014). While actor-network theory has developed in many directions (Law & Hassard, 1999; Law & Singleton, 2005), amongst which is organisation studies (Czarniawska, 2009a; Alcadipani & Hassard, 2010), a common denominator throughout its mutations is the refusal to give ontological primacy (Caronia & Mortari, 2015) to either human or material agency and, despite what the name suggests, it entails a methodological sensitivity rather than a theoretical prescription (Law, 1999). True to its origins in an engineering school (Muniesa, 2015), actor-network theory means looking at how seemingly unrelated things work together to constitute macro-actors (Callon & Latour, 1981). Within CCO-research, the group of scholars known as 'the Montreal School' borrow actor-network theory's suggestion that non-human things can have agency (Cooren, 2010; Cooren & Bencherki, 2011) and adds to this the idea that all social relations

are established in and through communication. This ANT/CCO-inspired approach is found in Chapters 3 and 4.

Chapters 2 focuses on the political dimension of the places where independent workers gather, although each does so in very different ways. It draws on the work of a specific type of post-Marxist political philosophy known as autonomism (Toscano, 2007; Jones & Murtola, 2012; Muldoon, 2014), and considers how social actors aim to change the ways in which they are conceived by other actors in the same field. Underpinning this study is the consideration that practices scale up to maintain or change the social order (Battilana, Leca, & Boxenbaum, 2009).

Throughout the dissertation, I use the term solo-entrepreneurs interchangeably with self-employed or independent workers, or freelancers, yet in all cases the people who are studied are registered in the chamber of commerce and can gain income from their work. Chapters 2 and 3 are the result of a year of ethnographic research in three so-called art factories in Amsterdam. In Chapter 2, I zoom in on various moments of grassroots organising between the independent workers in these aforementioned creative spaces. Here the question is if, and how, a shared building can provide a foundation for grassroots forms of solidarity. Sketching the setting of independent workers in the creative and cultural industries as one of precarious working conditions, and engaging with the research on creative city policies as a vehicle for gentrification, I make use of the notions of 'the multitude' and 'the common' in autonomist political theory in order to show how the actors I follow understand the political potential of these places.

In Chapter 3, drawing on the same empirical material, I engage with the literature on space and the emergence and endurance of organising practices. I apply the conceptual framework of CCO and actor-network theory in order to reveal how, in new organisational spaces, material objects help to constitute social ties between individual workers. By presenting two vignettes, each detailing the processes in a different art factory, I show that while human actors actively shape their physical environment, the material objects they drag around, leave be, or try to get rid of, can also have an unexpected impact on the emerging community of such spaces. By showing this interaction between human and non-human actors, I show how material assemblages contribute to the emergence and endurance of organising practices. Along the way, I synthesise two different views on materiality and space in organisational research, of which the first holds that space only exists insofar as it is performed into being, while the second asserts that space is performative in that it influences and shapes action.

Chapter 4, finally, results from a stint of ethnographic fieldwork during which I followed an arts organisation in the final stage of its existence. This network-like organisation, consisting only of contractors and volunteers, was faced with a lack of financial funds and had to stop functioning as the organisational actor it had been in order to find other forms through which to continue the artistic and cultural programmes it had developed. Tracking this process during the production of an artistic event allowed for a reflection of what makes an organisation, and, with the theoretical insights from CCO literature, revealed how the organisation's boundaries were drawn differently in different instances.

1.6 Some Notes on Epistemology and Methodology

All chapters in this dissertation are based on a constructionist and pragmatist (Czarniawska, 2008; Martela, 2015) outlook on social scientific research. Pragmatism is often seen as a solution to the debate between positivists and constructivists in organisational research (Martela, 2015). It takes human experience as primary, in the sense that 'as human beings we can never escape our embeddedness within the world of experiencing into which we are thrown as actors' (Martela, 2015: 539). This means that the researcher's task becomes to understand this embeddedness, to see how it works.

The starting point of a constructionist view is that all social actors co-construct the social phenomenon that is studied. This is not a version of relativism, but rather an assumption that what we study as social scientists is not 'reality out there', while we stay at a safe distance, but rather the stance that reality is built. This building often happens through the use of language: 'Words are things [...], and as things they can be used to construct or destruct. This construction or assembling is continuous: stability is an achievement but also an optical illusion' (Czarniawka, 2009: 156).

As for the use of methods, Chapters 2 and 3 rely heavily on 'observant participation' (Moeran, 2009), while Chapter 4 uses a combination of this, plus the textual analysis of correspondence and archival data. All chapters can be situated in the organisational ethnography tradition (Ybema et al., 2009; Yanow, 2012; Fayard & Van Maanen, 2015), even when the empirical settings that are studied are not organisations in the classic sense of the word. Throughout all chapters, vignettes are used to construct detailed illustrations[2] of the practices that were observed (Langley & Abdallah, 2011: 127; Golden-Biddle & Locke, 2007), in the same way that a natural scientist may use a microscope to understand the entirety of a phenomenon through its individual

[2] In all chapters of the dissertation, the names of some respondents and informants have been changed to ensure them anonymity.

parts (Rouleau, 2005). Furthermore, telling stories through vignettes helps to dramatize episodes or routines in the study of organising, not with the aim of changing facts but with the aim of the story being read (Czarniawska, 2008; Humphreys & Watson, 2009). Vignettes are an often-chosen form to present ethnographic or other qualitative research (e.g. Belmondo & Sargis-Roussel, 2015; Vásquez, Schoeneborn, & Sergi, 2015), as they are illustrative of the things that came to stand out most during the analysis and help illuminate the most interesting findings in a condensed way (Golden-Biddle & Locke, 2007).

Contrary to the tradition of ethnography, this thesis takes the shape of separate essays that became the individual chapters. Each of these have to convince the reader of the interest of the specific focus the chapter takes (Golden-Biddle & Locke, 2007). Thus, although my continuing involvement in, and exposure to, the organisational setting shows all the characteristics of ethnography, the output of the research does not look like a classic ethnographic study. An overview of the different chapters and their focus and contribution is provided below in Table 1.

It is important to note here that the empirical settings in the different essays are not entirely isolated from one another. The organisation featured in the final empirical chapter was approached via an artist who is also involved in the ACTA building, discussed in Chapters 2 and 3. The field of such spaces in Amsterdam is interconnected: people move between different spaces, caused either by the temporariness of such spaces or because of their social networks or due to having multiple and fast-changing professional commitments. People who reside in a creative building may attend events in another building, and people can fulfil related but separate roles in different places.

On a final note, the term 'at-home ethnography' applies to the general methodological approach used in this thesis. At-home ethnography is the type of ethnographic research that is conducted in a familiar organisational setting, to which the researcher has natural access (Alvesson, 2009). My fieldwork took place in my hometown, and this obvious 'at-home-ness' was further reinforced by the similarities between myself and the people I studied, the affinities this created (Gilmore & Kenny, 2015; Beech et al., 2009), and the fact that, for a short while, I lived and worked in one of the spaces I studied. As a result, some of the people I met during the fieldwork that resulted in Chapters 2 and 3 pointed me to some of the places and people I ended up studying for the research in Chapter 4.

Chapter	Research Question	Setting	Practices of…	Central Concepts	Theoretical Contribution
2 **Creative Work and Autonomist Potentiality**	How do the concepts 'multitude' and 'common' help understand resistance among creative workers?	Two creative spaces in Amsterdam (ACTA and Breehives Cruquiusweg/ Fenix) and events for policy-makers and creative workers.	Resistance; (Self-) Organising.	Multitude; common; creative work; resistance; organising.	The identification of some empirical support for concepts from autonomist theory as well as limitations of these concepts.
3 **The Role of Space in the Emergence and Endurance of Organising**	How does material space help the emergence and endurance of organising?	Two creative spaces in Amsterdam: ACTA and Breehives Cruquiusweg/ Fenix.	Organising.	Space; organising; practices; organisational endurance.	To show how material space is shaped by organising practices and constitutive of those practices, as well as show how space contributes to the endurance of organising practices.
4 **Boundaries on the Move**	If organisations are constituted and reconstituted through communication, how are organisational boundaries talked about, mobilised, and drawn?	A small, network-like arts organisation active in the northern borough of Amsterdam, where it brings art and cultural activity to local communities in a participative manner.	Organising.	Boundaries; communication as discursive and material practice; organising.	We contribute to the literature on CCO by showing how organisational boundaries are constituted in communication, and to the literature on organisational boundaries by showing what a communication-centred perspective allows for.

Table 1: Overview of the Empirical Chapters.

2

Creative Work and Autonomist Potentiality
Snapshots taken from Amsterdam's art factories

Abstract

This chapter argues that while creative spaces are believed to instigate creative production, their strongest value is in producing new possibilities for political organising. By zooming in on short snapshots of resistance against gentrification in creative spaces in Amsterdam, it is investigated whether small-scale and grass-roots forms of solidarity between independent workers in the creative industries can be understood as examples of the autonomist notions of the common and the multitude. By placing observations of creative workers' self-organising practices alongside autonomist theory, I suggest that autonomist thought is a promising philosophy for a politicised view of creative production, because it celebrates multiplicity and uniqueness. This is a timely topic in a society with growing numbers of freelancers and increasing flexibilisation of labour. This paper contributes to research on self-organising among creative workers and to the literature on work conditions in the creative industries.

2.1 Introduction

Cultural studies scholars are increasingly interested in how the production of cultural goods is organised (Gill & Pratt, 2008; Ross, 2009; 2012; McRobbie, 2015). One reason for this is the rise of policies worldwide instigating what has become known as the creative industries, and which before that was variously known as the cultural industries or the culture industry (O'Connor, 2010), prompting scholars to study this institutional reframing. Recent research on this matter has suggested that artists are now taken as the example of entrepreneurial resilience (Gielen, 2013), because they have always had to deal with the fact that their work is irregular, uncertain, and underpaid (Hesmondhalgh & Baker, 2010; 2011; Siebert & Wilson, 2013; Gielen, 2015). Furthermore, McRobbie (2015) has argued that the artistic, creative, or bohemian way of life is now the preferred lifestyle of young, middle class, workers, so much so that they are willing to sacrifice any social security that would have come with 'traditional' employment. Further empirical research has indeed shown that freelancers have a low income and hardly any social security (MacKinlay & Smith, 2009; Avkidos & Kalogeresis, 2016).

The precarity of creative workers has led to a renewed interest in autonomist theory among this group, as well as among the people studying them. Autonomism is a political philosophy rooted in the Italian radical left of the 1970s. Autonomism has recently entered the domain of cultural studies (Lash, 2006; Olma & Koukouzelis, 2007; Muldoon, 2014; Gielen, 2015) to study, for instance, workers in hospitality (Dowling, 2007) and the media industry (Mattoni, 2012). But most of all, and predating cultural studies scholars' interest, autonomist theory has also been read and used by artists and art theorists to make sense of their political position (McRobbie, 2011). Rather than being predictive, autonomist concepts are very powerful in that they help people imagine their communities differently. Hence, this chapter should be read as an attempt to understand the discursive power of autonomist ideas, rather than an attempt to test the validity of this 'theory'.

Although these ideas will be developed further in the next section, the core idea of autonomism is that the multitude – in the sense of the accumulated creative and social potential of a mass of people – is always there, even when it is not organised for capital to take advantage of it (Muldoon, 2014). The multitude is understood as the possibility of a cooperation between minds, without (and before) the intervening of capital or industry (Lazzarato, 2004). It is an alternative for the modern understanding of 'the people', which implies the presence of a state (Farneti, 2006). The common, then, is the political potential of this multitude (Hardt & Negri, 2004: 105).

In the first place, the choice for this framework emerged out of discussions in the artistic community in Amsterdam I witnessed during my fieldwork. Influential in this was the MyCreativity Sweatshop symposium, held in Amsterdam at the subversive nightclub Trouw in November 2014. This event brought together the politicised voices of artists, creative workers, and theorists from the Netherlands, Belgium, Germany, the United Kingdom, and other neighbouring nexuses of creative and artistic production. Autonomist concepts, most notably 'multitude' and 'the common', featured in the discussions among practitioners and researchers attending this event.

Second, finding empirical illustrations of the use of autonomist ideas also responds to a call made in academic research. While autonomist scholars themselves have pointed out that their 'political project must clearly be grounded in an empirical analysis' (Hardt & Negri, 2004: 105), it has also been noted that such grounding is still lacking (Hesmondhalgh, 2007; Valli, 2015), and this is precisely where this chapter aims to make a contribution.

Third, the findings of this chapter can also be situated in an increased interest among organisational scholars to extend social movement theories in order to better understand the links between resistance and organisation (McPhail, 2017; Mumby et al., 2017). Whereas social movement theory has argued that shared interest is the reason for collective action (Tarrow, 1994), this view has been expanded in recent years to more fully answer how such collective action emerges, what its behavioural antecedents are, and what forms it can take. Autonomist ideas could be seen as part of the discursive toolbox that practitioners of resistance can draw on, and autonomist theory has indeed been situated within this updated framework of social movement theory (Graziano & Trogal, 2017; Mumby et al., 2017). Likewise, cultural sociologists have focused on the ways in which art collectives can be understood as social movements, expanding social movement theory with the concepts of Bourdieu and Becker (Hollands & Vail, 2012).

The discursive power of autonomism is studied by focusing on instances of organising (Weick, 1979; Czarniawska, 2009b; Sillince, 2010) which can happen in – or outside of – organisations, as well as in spite of those organisations (Czarniawska, 2013). Sillince (2010: 133) argues that organising always happens through negotiation of membership, organisational self-structuring, activity coordination, and institutional positioning. While it will become clear that not all instances discussed in this chapter are examples of organising, the primary aim for collecting and studying this empirical material was to detect the relationships between the (for the population at hand) seductive aspects of the redemptive fiction of autonomism (Farneti, 2006) on the one hand, and organising on the other. More concretely, this study provides a reflection,

based on empirical material collected during ethnographic research among groups of creative workers in Amsterdam, on the concepts of the common and the multitude. I will show how creative workers try to resist being instrumentalised for the sake of helping neighbourhoods gentrify through the instalment of temporary creative hubs. These moments of resistance are studied as moments which are 'organisational' to different extents, in the sense that the resistance sometimes remains on a discursive level (i.e. voicing dissent or concern), and sometimes result in taking action and organising (Mumby et al., 2017). I then wonder to what extent we can detect any impact of the common or the multitude in their organising practices. In other words: can these people be said to act from a sense of 'multitudeness' (Farneti, 2006: 282) and if so, what difference does it make for how they organise?

The observations presented in this chapter are based on fieldwork at various creative spaces or so-called 'art factories' in Amsterdam. Zooming in on snapshots of resistance, I will suggest that hubs for creative workers foster a basis for social and political organisation, in addition to being a platform for innovation and synergy. Thus, I will argue that although these spaces may benefit creative production (Clare, 2013; Fuzi, 2015), their strongest value for the creative workers is in producing new possibilities for organising. Spending time in these spaces and attending events where creative workers would seek out the opportunity to voice concern also made apparent that the voices of dissent sometimes came out of intentional and strategic protest (snapshots I and II), as well as more emergent types of resistance (snapshots III and IV) where more politically-aware members of the collective motivated other members of the same space to self-organise, and used political vocabulary in doing so.

The structure of this chapter is as follows. First, I will present a concise explanation of autonomist philosophy, and in particular the notions of common and multitude, in conversation with recent research into the practices of workers in the creative and cultural industries. Second, I will outline the empirical setting of Amsterdam's art factories and explain my methodological approach. Third, I will present the four 'snapshots' taken from situations in art factories as well as from meeting points between policy makers or politicians and creative workers. These will serve to demonstrate how the people working in these places share a social identity or a political concern, rather than a professional interest. In the concluding analysis and discussion, I will argue that the autonomist notions of the multitude and the common help bring to the surface the social and political potential of such art factories or similar structures, while at the same time highlighting how existing policies and discourses sometimes prevent this potential from coming to fruition. Finally, I will summarise the contributions of this chapter as well as indicate further avenues for research.

2.2 The Multitude, the Common, and Creative Work

Although the term autonomism covers a heterogeneous set of political philosophies, ranging from the Italian 1970s workerist movement, to situationism, to Bergsonism (Deleuze, 1988), and represented by authors such as Antonio Negri, Maurizio Lazzarato, Paolo Virno, and Franco Berardi, the core idea is that the multitude and the common are ontologically prior to the workings of capital (Hardt & Negri, 2004). With this idea, autonomism moves 'from a paradigm of material scarcity to one of immaterial abundance' (Toscano, 2007: 74). This immaterial abundance exists in the realisation that the subjective power of human beings, and the collective accumulation of that subjective power, always already exists before any economic or legal principle can claim or exploit it. For instance, Hardt and Negri understand labour not as waged labour, but as 'human creative capacities in all their generality' (2004: 105).

Hardt and Negri define the multitude as 'singularities that act in common' (2004: 104). Hence, the multitude is not characterised by homogeneity, but rather by 'an irreducible multiplicity [that] can never be flattened into sameness, unity, identity, or indifference' (ibid: 105). Eventually, they argue, the multitude can become a body of creative forces that are able to autonomously construct new social and political structures (Hardt & Negri, 2000: 15). This body is called the common.

Lazzarato's definition of the multitude focuses more on creation and invention. For him, the multitude of different singularities enables what he calls 'the cooperation between minds', which 'expresses a power of co-creation and co-realisation' (2004: 197). This cooperation is facilitated by the immaterialisation of work (Lazzarato, 2006a). The goal is to prevent this power of creation from being captured and exploited by capital (Lazzarato, 2006a). Indeed, this concern is the focus of Jones and Murtola's (2012) article, in which they state that there is a potentially liberating element in the fact that work is increasingly incorporating 'elements of life' (2012: 638), but that at the same time capitalism still has the capacity to expropriate this. In other words, the cooperation between minds is not enough. New forms of organisation and representation have to be found in order to prevent expropriation. But what do these look like?

Whereas Lazzarato sees the multitude already as a 'constructive power of cooperative life' (Toscano, 2007: 75), Hardt and Negri think the multitude only reaches its political potential once it becomes the common and, as we will see, it is this move from multitude to common that is anticipated or argued for in the snapshots constructed to zoom in on the empirical material. According to existing literature, one of the ways in which this shift might be actualised is when new spaces and temporalities

are created (Negri, 2003: 185). This might take on the form of political movements (Cuninghame, 2010; Lorey, 2015), but the common can also emerge out of workers' initiatives. For instance, Lazzarato studied a Paris-based initiative of freelance theatre performers which, he argues, came about because the group could no longer be governed through institutions (2006). In a similar vein, Gielen (2015) has argued that the decreasing role of cultural institutions gives way to an artistic multitude. Such 'floating populations' (Lazzarato, 2006b: 1) may become constitutive of a common.

But how is a group of individuals with a shared interest different from a multitude on its way to becoming a common? What do these concepts help us see? In the current study, snapshots are taken from situations of modest, perhaps even tiny, moments of resistance and organising. By zooming in on these moments, I draw attention to the seeming mundaneness of these moments in order to question if and how these situations or cases could be seen through the lens of the multitude and the common, as these notions are understood in autonomist theory.

2.3 Empirical Setting

The Dutch capital has a specific policy and budget to transform empty property into broedplaatsen, which the city council translates as 'art factories'.[3] Art factories accommodate Amsterdam's creative and mostly self-employed workforce. These temporary structures, often reconfigured office buildings, schools, or warehouses, provide workers in the cultural and creative industries with inexpensive workspace, and sometimes living space, as well as the opportunity to network and collaborate with others.

The policy, managed by a separate department called Bureau Broedplaatsen (the Art Factory Bureau), falls under the responsibility of the urban planning department and has existed since 1999.[4] The fact that broedplaatsen are subsidised by the city ensures that rents are below market averages (Peck, 2012). Most art factories are run by small, usually non-profit, companies which rent out entire buildings to artists, although some are run by groups of artists themselves. Usually, these small companies apply for funding at the Bureau Broedplaatsen in order to renovate a specific building. The Bureau Broedplaatsen also provides them with expertise on legal and logistic matters,

[3] http://www.amsterdameconomicboard.com/nieuws/411/art-factories-in-amsterdam. Besides being a policy term, the reference to a factory is fitting given the working class origins of autonomist philosophy.

[4] See also the English summary of the policy documents on the website of the Art Factory Bureau: https://www.amsterdam.nl/bestuur-organisatie/organisaties/organisaties/bureau-broedplaatsen/beleid-doelen/

while the small companies running these art factories are much more involved with the target groups of these buildings than city council officials could be. Hence, these particular collaborations could be characterised as a case of cross-sector partnerships (Koschmann, Kuhn, & Pfarrer, 2012).

The art factory policy originates from the late 1990s, when various subcultural groups were evicted from their cultural centres and semi-legal squats along the harbour of the city as a result of urban renewal initiatives (Peck, 2012: 468). As the property market reached a peak due to the economic boom of the nineties, the city decided that the alternative cultural venues around the harbour, that had emerged from the squatting scene of the eighties, had to disappear (Peck 2012: 465) so that the harbour could become the city's eye-catcher (Abrahamse et al., 2000). This led to protests initiated by the alternative scene and joined by the leaders of museums, art schools, and other cultural institutions, who had long understood that they benefitted from the artistic underground (Uitermark, 2004).

These protests caused the city government to reserve a sum of 45 million euros for the facilitation of what would later become known as art factories. The first official document stating the mission of the policy, effective as of 2000, reads that 'these (living and) work spaces enlarge the quality, diversity, and image of an area, they "produce" culture, which adds to the cultural richness of the city […], and the social climate of the area is improved by offering facilities to the neighbourhood'.[5] In spite of these idealistic origins (Van de Geyn & Draaisma, 2009), the policy soon acquired an economic flavour. Starting in 2008, in the hope that the creative sector would instigate economic growth, the art factory policy took on a more commercial approach, including small tech businesses and advertising agencies in its target audiences (Peck, 2012: 469). This coincided with the rise of policies in many countries stimulating the creative industries on both a national and a municipal level, indicating a general tendency to link creativity not just to artistic practice, but to business and economic growth. For example, the city of Amsterdam has the ambition to become the main centre for creativity in Europe by 2020.[6] The Dutch 'top sectors policy', in which the creative industries are included, also shows a belief in creativity, cross-sectoral collaboration, and innovation for the sake of economic growth and international competition.[7] The term 'creative economy' has been acting as a portmanteau for the assumption that creativity is at the core of economic development (Indergaard,

[5] http://bongersite.nl/broedplaats401.html

[6] http://www.amsterdameconomicboard.com/clusters/creative-industries/over-cluster

[7] http://topsectoren.nl/home/topsectoren-hoe-waarom

Pratt, & Hutton, 2013; Hewison, 2014). With this assumption comes the hope that the residents of such places will start to interact, network, and eventually collaborate. For example, the policy document for the art factories policy states that 'art factories boost the rise in the new creative activity that originates and develops from the art factories. They not only form part of professional networks, but also of informal circuits that are important for creativity'.[8]

Although it seems safe to assume that any creative worker wants to work in a stimulating environment, many of the independent workers mentioned that they do not feel that their place of work contributes significantly to their professional progress. Instead, they emphasised things such as unexpected friendships or 'having a space to think'. While these spaces are certainly used for the execution of paid and unpaid work, there seemed to be another element of vital importance: network sociality without production. It is precisely this element that paves the way to the modest yet intriguing examples of political organising that emerged during the research period. Although the 'political-ness' of the snapshots will differ, each is characterised by an awareness of – and reluctance towards – the use of creative spaces in the gentrification of urban areas, a process happening not just in Amsterdam but all around the world (Elwood, 2006; Wen, 2012; Warren, 2014; Valli, 2015). The snapshots will show how the workers in these art factories tried to resist the role they felt was attributed to them in these complex processes of urban change.

2.4 Methodology

The research conducted for this study was inductive and started from an interest in situated meaning making of the social actors studied (Yanow, 2012). The fieldwork took place between November 2013 and August 2015. Although the aim was to gain a good overview of the field of art factories, most fieldwork took place at three art factories: A Lab (opened September 2013), Broedplaats ACTA (opened September 2012; capacity doubled per January 2014), and Beehive Cruquiusweg (opened February 2013). These were chosen, in the first place, because they had each recently opened around the time that the fieldwork started, and therefore offered an opportunity to observe if and how organising emerged within each building.

I gained access to the field through the organisations running these buildings and the initial plan was to conduct two months of full time research in each art factory. However, early on in the research, the organisation running Beehive Cruquiusweg

[8] http://www.fnv-kiem.nl/images/contents/ASD_BBA_Beleidskader_2012-16_6_1.pdf

ended up in a conflict with the landlord of the warehouse which housed this art factory. After it became clear that the conflict would not be resolved, several of its tenants decided to set up their own art factory together elsewhere. Dropping by at weekly internal meetings, as well as at meetings with city officials, allowed me to follow them as they applied for funding, decided on a name, and eventually moved into a new warehouse.

In the case of ACTA and A Lab, the fieldwork consisted of almost daily participant observation, for instance through informal conversations with tenants and members of the managing organisation, and participation in social events. Field notes were taken with a focus on challenging my existing expectations and tacit knowledge (Wolfinger, 2002). I wrote down factual accounts of what happened, but also focused on atmosphere, sensory input, and the thoughts and questions emerging from interactions (Emerson, Fretz, & Shaw, 1995; Sunstein & Chiseri-Strater, 2012). Quickly, research at ACTA became a case of 'observant participation' (Moeran, 2009) when, after having proposed the research plan, I joined the living community of this art factory as a tenant – a move prompted as much by the housing shortage as by research interests. Staying as a tenant after the official research period allowed for the continuing development of my observations. The intense daily observations made room for continued attention to moments that could trigger my understanding of the setting of which I was now an insider. In parallel to this continued exposure to the ACTA, I would go to the other two art factories weekly (Beehive Cruquiusweg) or daily (A Lab) during the fieldwork periods.

In addition to this immersive approach, I conducted twenty interviews with tenants across all three spaces and three interviews with policy makers in order to deepen my reflections. I also attended two official events organised by the Bureau Broedplaatsen in order to better situate these everyday practices against their institutional backdrop. Finally, I paid short visits to eight other creative hubs throughout the Netherlands to generate brief comparison with the three focal places.

Given the long duration of the fieldwork, the observations were analysed iteratively throughout the research period. Open coding (Tracy, 2012), the process of looking for phrases that seemed interesting at first glance (Saldaña, 2009), resulted in a long list of codes which were clustered into themes to be explored further in interviews and informal conversations. Some of these themes were the following: the international character of art factories, being a freelancer by choice or by necessity, the importance of creativity in work and in life, and the challenges of organising something among a group of freelancers. After the official period of fieldwork ended (July 2014), recurring visits to the various art factories, my continued involvement in ACTA, as well as

events in or about art factories organised by the city council, allowed me to see if new information demanded a new interpretation of the empirical material. This led to a saturation of the data, meaning that previously identified codes and themes were also found in the most recently gathered material, without new information challenging the previous analysis. After a final round of coding, I structured the codes using the two aforementioned questions: (1) why are we here? and (2) who is in charge and why?

Keeping these questions in mind, I looked at tensions that could be located throughout the collected material. From these moments of tension, I chose four specific situations, which I wrote down as vignettes, or snapshots. These function as 'close-ups', amplifying the recurring themes throughout the empirical material. The first two are taken from moments where policy-makers and politicians meet and resistance against current policy and politics is voiced, and the final two are taken from situations of organising amongst creative workers. As a result of the need to select only those moments from the empirical material that best illustrate the practices of self-organising and resistance observed, only two of the three art factories feature in the snapshots.

The occupations represented in the art factories which were studied range from musicians to computer coders, from fashion designers to internet entrepreneurs, and from visual artists to design-thinking consultants. However, their reasons for working in these buildings were often expressed in political terms. One person mentioned that 'places like this resist corporate society', a statement more hopeful than that of Jones and Murtola (2012). However, resisting corporate society is not done through leisure and recreation only – an idea that was often invoked in autonomist thinking, which, for its emphasis on the possibility of refusing to work, has also been referred to as a 'hedonist Marxism' (Gill & Pratt, 2008). Socialising is certainly a part of these creative spaces, but the focal point of these places is production. Hence, I would like to suggest that it is only by understanding such places as inherently – indeed ontologically – productive, that we can begin to capture their potential for producing a new politics.

2.5 Presentation of Material: Four Snapshots

I. 'Only a pawn in their game'

A May afternoon in 2015, in a nightclub on the outskirts of the city. People enter the room; not sure what decorum is in place. The group is too large for everyone to introduce themselves to everyone, yet name tags are not handed out. I had received an invitation but no one seems to care whether I belong here. Looking around the room, quite a few faces are familiar. They belong to managers of art factories, heads of departments at art schools, or people working for unions and associations for the arts. This afternoon is organised by the Bureau Broedplaatsen and I recognise some of their staff at the back of the room, double-checking if the beamer is working. My invite addressed me as someone 'involved in working with art factories' and asked me to join the meeting in order to help 'formulate a set of possibilities' to impact the municipal policies for art factories. Walking up to two people I knew, both of them leading small organisations fighting for affordable workspaces for artists, I asked them what they thought their influence could be this afternoon. Both of them responded 'none', and mentioned that this was merely an opportunity to get a sense of the debate: the tendencies, the terms being used.

Once seated, the discussion starts. It appears the hottest topic of the day is a suggested change in policy, resulting in shorter rental leases for artists and other creative workers in art factories. The idea behind this is to make room for 'young talent' in need of space. Someone who introduces himself as an artist and musician gets up: 'I can make a living with my work, but I know that I will not be able to afford a more expensive studio ten years from now.' This sets the stage for a heated discussion about whether it is realistic to expect self-employed workers in the arts or creative industries to increase their income over the course of a few years. Instead of waiting for the moderator to signal to people that they have the floor and make sure they have a microphone, people simply shout. Then someone gets up and says: 'Why did we not receive an invitation to this meeting? You want to change everything but this is about us, we are working in those places!' The director of the Bureau Broedplaatsen, who had been standing at the front next to the moderator, looks rather underwhelmed and answers: 'Well, you know, you are here now.'

Now that it is clear that a certain group of artists or creative workers have not been invited although they are 'involved in working with art factories' too, the atmosphere shifts irreparably. The moderator announces the roundtables that are scheduled to commence any time now, and for a moment the situation seems to calm down. But before the mass accepts being directed into different settings in order to discuss other

things, one of the unexpected attendees takes the stage again: 'We are against forcing people to move out! With "we" I mean us, the artists. But of course, nobody listens to us this afternoon. It's like the great Bob Dylan sang: We are only a pawn in their game.'

This person represents the vision, particularly wide held in Amsterdam's alternative scene, that art factories are inherently autonomous because of their ties to the cultural squats of the 1980s and 1990s, which often rejected the authority of the city council and claimed to live according to their own rules (Breek & De Graad, 2001). As a result of this heritage, artists who resided in these cultural squats now refuse to accept that being a tenant of an art factory comes with strings attached. Whereas younger tenants often see temporariness – of the place or of the lease of their personal studio – as a logical price to pay for having such low rent, the generation of the protagonist of this snapshot does not see the relation to the city council and the art factory policy in terms of a transaction.

The 'we, the artists' he claims to be speaking on behalf of, could be seen as displaying a sense of 'multitude-ness' (Farneti, 2006), especially because it remains unclear who these people he claims to belong to are. However, even if articulation of concerns is embedded in a wider sense of discontent or protest with the changes in policy, this instance can hardly be seen as the construction of the common, in the sense of a new social and political structure (Hardt & Negri, 2000: 15). The dissent is positioned vis-à-vis the anticipated change in policy, and articulated in the hope of affecting policy makers.

II. 'We cannot organise rebellion'

In March 2015, the alderman in charge of the art factory policy retired and a celebration was organised in his honour. The occasion brought together representatives of the three major organisations running art factories, some tenants, as well as property developers hoping to hop onto the art factory bandwagon. In order to add content to the celebration, a set of interviews with some of these actors was planned to take place before the real party would start. The moderator invited Lotta and Micha onto the stage. Lotta was one of the initiators of an art factory that had started out as a squat. During her interview, she observes that 'in this field we talk a lot about the ties with the squatting movement, but a squat is something very different from an art factory.' 'We care about not making a profit', Micha adds, Lotta continues: 'For us, it is not about success, but about experiment. That idea is disappearing. You invite us to appear on stage here, but that is the only common ground between us.'

A property developer responded in a slightly agitated manner, articulating the importance of commercial developers in setting up interesting, bohemian-looking,

yet commercially viable venues. The moderator, pressed for time, moved on to the retiring alderman. Amused by the clash of ideologies that had just unfolded, he mused on the evolutions of the field throughout his career in the diplomatic fashion of a true politician: 'Urban life is about encounters, participation, empowerment. In the beginning, art factories were about the collective, now we see that people are more individualistic. It is still about autonomy, only now the autonomy is in entrepreneurship.' The moderator, always eager to stir up the discussion, jumps in: 'But just to be clear, I imagine that it would go way too far for an art factory manager to drive a Maserati, right?', to which the alderman responds: 'Well, the city council cannot organise rebellion, can it? I would say that that is our institutional constraint.'

In this snapshot, the tensions between these cultural squats and the art factories become even clearer. But instead of accusing the policy makers and politicians of not giving them what they deserve, Lotta and Micha place themselves completely outside of this political framework. They do so by saying that 'what we do is different' and by refusing to be seen in the light of 'success' and 'output'. Their statement enacts the common because the place they run is jointly owned by the collective of artists 'and people interested in an alternative way of living', as Micha puts it. Thus, they are less dependent on the goodwill of the Bureau Broedplaatsen and place themselves less in dialogue with this institutional framework, in order to illustrate that their position is indeed more autonomist in nature.

At the same time, the initiative Lotta and Micha set up was able to get a mortgage for its venue with the help of the Bureau Broedplaatsen and could thus be seen as dependent on them (Keizer, 2014). Their claim to the original ideology of autonomous places is met with scepticism by several attendees of the event. When the about-to-be-former alderman makes the observation that it is up to the people 'on the ground' to organise rebellion, he shows himself sympathetic to their criticism. At the same time, he emphasises that the city council will never pick sides in this battle, thus telling the initiators of such places that it is up to them to maintain their activist stripes.

III. 'But what kind of people will they be?'

At the end of that very same month, a group of people gathers in a dark warehouse in an industrial area in the east of the city. Some people look for electrical cords in order to switch on some improvised lighting. A young man serves great espressos from the container which serves as his studio. When I mention that all the cups on his serving platter are different, he answers: 'I just take them along whenever I have a coffee somewhere. It means less work for the dishwashers, you know.' It is clear that property is an ambiguous idea here.

The most pressing topic on the agenda of this meeting is the funding application for the Bureau Broedplaatsen that needs to be finalised. The group is trying to move elsewhere in order to stay together. There is an empty warehouse available further down the same road that would accommodate all of them. However, they need money. In preparation for this meeting, Rachel, a filmmaker with a lot of experience in community organising had sent me a first draft of their plan. She hopes that everyone will have useful input this evening, so she can finish the application. Their current lease expires soon, so they must act fast.

The meeting turns to issues of governance for their new place. The organisation who set up the current space did not put rules in place, and this resulted in illegal activities such as the sale of alcohol and marihuana. Artists travelling to Amsterdam from countries such as Portugal and Spain had camped out in the warehouse during the summer, turning the place into a recreational area instead of a place of work. Rose, a young artist, is reluctant: 'We have seen how easily it goes wrong.' A designer answers: 'Well, everyone should be running this new organisation we're about to set up. It should be very transparent and open.' Rose: 'But how will we make money?' Rachel: 'We will have more than 200 square metres to use as an event space. People can pay us to produce events for them, with all the accumulated creative know-how we have, that is very easy.' Rose looks even more worried. 'But what kind of people will they be? Will they fit with us?', she asks.

Here, the resistance consists not in confronting a politician, but rather in the difficulty of playing the game that comes with interacting with the institutional environment, for instance by applying for funding. While Rachel seems confident the group can manage a space together, it is also clear that the group is not one to play by the rules. The snapshot from this meeting shows that the real issue will be whether the group will be able to self-organise and achieve a style of governance that helps them play the game of getting funding and developing business.

Also, while there is a clear conceptualisation of the group being positioned against the civil servants they have to convince, there is also an effort to exclude certain types of people from becoming members of the group. The current members warn each other about free riders and remind themselves to be wary of people who may see the space as a place for relaxation only, disturbing those who want to work productively. Rose also worries about marketing their services to people from the surrounding area, because they may not fit into the common they are trying to constitute. This shows how self-organising should not be romanticised either. The fact that a grass roots community emerges does not mean that everyone is always welcome (Joseph, 2002).

Although the self-organising practices of these artists seem more inspired by their shared interests and an early type of organisational identification, taking shape in this interaction (Chaput, Brummans, & Cooren, 2011), than by the autonomist idea of setting up something outside of the existing social and political frameworks (Hardt & Negri, 2000: 15), in the same meeting, as well as in the funding application she wrote, Rachel mentions democratic and deliberative models to run their new organisation, which could be qualified as a politics that is in line with autonomism. However, there is no mention of the wish to exist without the support of the Bureau Broedplaatsen. Quite the contrary, even.

IV. 'We have a lot to offer, but we need to get paid'

Similar topics were being addressed in the ongoing conversations with Adrienne, an activist and independent consultant for organisations, and one of the initiators of Open ACTA. Several artists and creative workers in the ACTA art factory wanted to counter the way they were perceived by the local city council. In her carefully decorated office full of plants, vibrantly coloured cups, and full bookshelves, Adrienne explained what the aim was: 'You see, we are an experiment. We've only just started out here, we are only just getting to know each other, and already they are onto us. We don't want to be obligated to have these open house days where everyone comes in to see what we do. We want work! So, the idea is that we do offer ourselves to the neighbourhood, but not for free. There are budgets for local residents to organise social and cultural activities, as long as you don't make money from those activities. If I would apply for that funding, and use some of it as a fee for my work, that makes me commercial and that's not allowed. But the local supermarket is allowed to make revenue from the grocery shopping I do to organise my event! I'm trying to get them to see how strange this is.' She continues: 'The local council sees us as an alternative to social workers. The rationale is that artists can do fun things for the neighbourhood and that they do not need to get paid for it, because doing something for the community should be on a voluntary basis. We are trying to challenge that rationale by saying that we have a lot to offer, but that we need to get paid.'

Another initiator of the Open ACTA, an artist to whom I spoke on an earlier occasion, related it to the residents of the area: 'My elevator pitch is that a group of people started this out of a desire to become part of a local economy, knowing that we, as a small community, are becoming part of the wider community.' She saw the Open ACTA project as something that brings people together within the building: 'I had a wish to become part of something larger. With these people, a community is starting to take shape. With everything going on with Open ACTA, it starts to become fun and interesting. This wish is really becoming reality.'

Here we see a situation in which a group is coming together to resist the idea that they should do unpaid work to brighten up the neighbourhood in exchange for their space. The ambitions of the Open ACTA project are very much articulated in political terms. 'We want to offer an alternative to the discourse that makes artists self-exploit themselves', one of the initiators said. Although the project is still in its beginning stage, it is clear that this group wants to present itself as professionals, not as creative volunteers.

One of the initiators of Open ACTA told me their aim was to resist not only the devaluing of artistic work, but also challenge the view of immigrant neighbourhoods – such as the one they were located in – as uninteresting and in need of 'revitalisation'. The ACTA building is part of a borough with a large number of inhabitants from migrant backgrounds, and is often criticised in local media for contributing to gentrification by displacing these groups (Griffioen, 2014). By targeting this migrant population as potential clients – for wedding photography, couture, and cultural activities for instance – the Open ACTA initiative counters the image of this borough as a cultural wasteland.

Although the Open ACTA initiators do not argue against the current discourse or rules of the art factory policy (as was the case in snapshots I and II), they do not aim to legitimise their presence in line with the policy's aims either (as was the case in snapshot III). Their case best illustrates the move from a multitude – which could be imagined as all tenants of this particular art factory, or even all cultural and creative workers in similar social circumstances – to a common. However modest in size, by becoming a cooperative, and offering products to different and more local groups, they were challenging the ways in which they were perceived and represented by public sector workers. For instance, when Adrienne was hired as a consultant, she would bring along artists whom she hired to create interventions, or give performances, as part of her problem-solving approach. In this way, she created new economic opportunities for several creative workers and placed artistic production in the middle of an organisational process.

2.6 Discussion

While the snapshots presented illustrate power dimensions typical between populations of independent workers and those impacting their circumstances (politicians, policy makers), the real question is how autonomist ideas give shape to the practices of resistance outlined above. When we think of the definitions of multitude as a mass of singularities, or as minds acting in cooperation, or as a multiplicity that cannot be reduced to sameness, we see how the concept makes sense given recent changes in

work at large. Jobs are increasingly about providing cultural, affective, and emotional content (Lazzarato, 2006a), and producers of artistic and creative goods excel in those tasks. Whereas in the era of the factory, managers and workers avoided spontaneity, workers now have to be creative, innovative (Gielen, 2013). Most of all, they have to live their work (or work their life) (Lazzarato, 2004).

The policy behind these art factories illustrates an awareness of the value that comes from the immaterial effects of this population's work. Creative workers have hip and bohemian lifestyles that enliven worn down neighbourhoods. They make clever use of symbolic and cultural capital whenever they showcase their work or organise their artistic practice in situ (Stahl 2008). The policy facilitating art factories can act as a vehicle in expropriating these assets. What these snapshots, however different in nature, have shown is that the creative workers are aware of this and say: 'this is ours'. In making a claim as a group, and in making a claim pertaining to the refusal to have their work expropriated or their vital presence exploited, this group of people moves from the multitude into a common on a discursive level.

One the one hand, it could be argued that the manifestation of the common on a discursive level – in the sense that people start thinking of themselves as a political 'we' – does not mean such feelings get translated into organisational realities. On the other, recent research on resistance in and outside of organisations has focused on the role of personal work experience (Ashcraft, 2008), resistance through discourse (Courpasson, 2017), and spatial tactics (Courpasson et al., 2017; Daskalaki & Kokkinidis, 2017) as a way to engage with oppressive or dominant frameworks. Moving beyond an 'either/or' framework (Ybema & Horvers, 2017) when trying to understand such practices of resistance, allows for assessing the value of such a political awareness without claiming it should necessarily translate into more formalised forms of political organisation.

Hence, I would argue that the usefulness of autonomism is mostly in the imaginative boost it offers in comparison to other politics of worker resistance, specifically labour unionism. In times of immaterial labour, where products are affective, aesthetic, and symbolic, the multitude consists of individuals making a living out of uniqueness in lifestyle (Eikhof & Haunschild, 2006; Stahl, 2008). McRobbie (2015) has already argued that the myth of uniqueness, intricately linked to a passion for creative production and the belief in one's talent, is strong enough to eradicate people's desires for basic social security. She already observed autonomism's popularity amongst artists and cultural workers (McRobbie, 2011), and this chapter offers further demonstration of the performative effects of the 'redemptive fiction' (Farneti, 2006) that the multitude and the common proposes.

Furthermore, its 'productivist ontology' (Morgan Parmett, 2012: 178) holds that creative production contains the seed of political possibilities and the organisation that needs to come with it. Thus, autonomist theory provides a way for a professional demographic that makes their living out of uniqueness (artists and other creative producers), to make a collective stance against expropriation without losing their singularity. Furthermore, the artists want to resist being what they call 'instrumentalised', but are not against engaging in commercial trade. They feel they are exploited because the autonomist theory holds that in contemporary capitalism every element of life (lifestyle choices, network activities, hanging out with friends) becomes part of production, because products are increasingly immaterial, aesthetic, or experience-based. Their issue is then not with trade itself, but with what they see as a lack of compensation for this value they provide. So, what is new about their way of organising, for this particular population, is the fact that it happens outside of labour unions. What the images of the multitude and the common propose is the exact opposite of union organising, which is to become not one out of many, but many out of many.

2.7 Conclusion: Contributions and Limitations

The first contribution of this chapter is to offer an empirical illustration of autonomist notions where this has been lacking (Valli, 2015). However, the point of this study has not been to empirically prove the existence of the phenomena that autonomist theorists such as Lazzarato and Negri have called the common and the multitude, but rather to offer some illustrations of how we can think through 'multitudeness' (Farneti, 2006: 282), thereby showing the performative impact of the term. I have argued that the redemptive fiction of the multitude helps to understand that the real potential of such temporary places is not only in fostering creative collaboration, but also to act as a testing ground for new instances of organising across boundaries of profession, discipline, and expertise.

The second contribution, and perhaps the most important one in the context of this thesis, is to theorise what exactly distinguishes being inspired by terms such as the common or the multitude, from autonomist organising. While organisation studies and management theory have put forward models for non-hierarchical, egalitarian, and self-organised collectives or 'holacracies' (Rossi, 2015; Monarth, 2014), autonomist theory has, as of yet, no explanation of what autonomist organising could look like, other than that it happens outside of, and in resistance to, governments and large institutions. What the snapshots in this chapter make clear however, is that all instances of resistance and self-organising are somehow also substantiated by those governments and institutions. Therefore, this chapter contributes conceptually to

autonomism by showing that its practices of resistance may rely on the very structures it resists. Rather than dismissing its potential or validity for this reason, it shows that autonomist resistance does not conform to an 'either/or paradigm' (Ybema & Horvers, 2017) but can co-exist with compliance with governance in certain aspects. Studying practices (Schatzki, 2005) as sites of organisation, and wondering about how these practices may scale up (Nicolini, 2012), requires us to ask of what these are practices. Returning to the most recent typology of resistance and organisation (Mumby et al., 2017), the first snapshot can be read as a case of 'insubordination' (Mumby et al., 2017: 1169), while the other three are better positioned somewhere in between 'collective infrapolitics' (ibid: 1165) and insurrection, the latter of which is linked most explicitly to autonomism (ibid: 1165). Again, this classification shows us that although the resistance was not covert or hidden, it did often occur within a context of institutional support, in the sense that dissent was voiced by those who were arguably also benefitting from the policies and politics they were resisting. Besides the question of whether the actors in this chapter were perhaps biting the hand that fed them, it is important to note here that such cases of resistance and self-organising rely on certain things in order to be substantiated. This chapter has focused on how a certain political discourse does part of this substantiation, while the focus in the next chapter will be on the material constitution of such organising.

The limitations of this study, and elements for further exploration when it comes to understanding the performative impact of autonomist ideas, are the dimensions of gender and race, or rather the lack thereof. Several authors have pointed out that precarity in creative work affects people of different genders differently (Larner & Molloy, 2009). Other research has pointed out that creative city policies risk marginalising people of colour (McLean, 2014) and that entrance to the workforce that makes up the creative industries is not equally available to all (Leung, 2016). It has been noted that precisely because autonomist philosophy does not appeal to one group in particular, it risks ignoring differences between the different groups that make up this multitude.

Further research is also needed to identify the prerequisites for the common to manifest. The snapshots indicate that the multitude moves into a common when it organises itself around a shared endeavour, but what the antecedents are is still somewhat of a puzzle. A first step could be to further investigate the role of physical spaces in constituting the common. The ephemeral character of the redemptive fiction of autonomism means that it needs grounding, and it is not surprising that the snapshots examined are grounded in spatial and physical presence. Whether it is the endeavour for a new place, or the defence of an existing one, it seems that physical places act as mediating entities in this process of organising. They embody

the resistance from which the incentive to self-organise emerges and help symbolise larger political issues. Other research has already pointed at the role of physical space in struggles of gender and class (Wasserman & Frenkel, 2015), and in urban resistance (Daskalaki & Kokkinidis, 2017), but further research should focus on the role of space or materiality in shaping new organisations out of such practices of resistance. Precisely this will be the aim of the chapter that follows.

3

The Role of Space in the Emergence and Endurance of Organising

How Independent Workers and Material Assemblages Constitute Organisation[9]

Abstract

By examining ethnographic data from two creative spaces that faced the challenge of enduring in turbulent times, we propose that space, understood as a material assemblage, participates in organising. It does so because space and practice reflexively account for each other. In other words, space may constrain or enable practice, as the literature abundantly illustrates, but practices also define and shape space. Rather than emphasising either of these two options, they should be understood as integral to each other, and it is precisely their reflexive relation that contributes to organising, as space participates in making practice recognisably similar through time.

[9] This chapter is the result of joint work with Nicolas Bencherki.

3.1 Introduction

The past years have witnessed an intensifying interest for spaces that accommodate independent workers, especially in the creative industries (Ebbers, 2014; Gandini, 2015; Kingma, 2016; Garrett et al., 2017). This may relate to the growing number of self-employed people internationally (Cappelli & Keller, 2013) and the global trend of creating cultural clusters for creative industries (Hitters & Richards, 2002; Musterd & Murie, 2011), often facilitated by the availability of industrial spaces in need of repurposing (Evans, 2009). Although they vary in size and profile (Bruneel et al., 2012; Capdevila, 2015), these creative hubs or clusters (Pratt, 2015) are often supported by government policies (Peck, 2012). Such spaces have mostly been studied with regard to how they may afford innovation through collaboration (Peschl & Fundneider, 2012; Capdevila, 2015; Gandini, 2015), and little attention has been paid to how such creative and collaborative spaces can give rise to durable organisations.

To solve this puzzle, we turn to the literature focusing on the role of practices in the constitution of organisations. Attention to practices, studies suggest, reveals how organisational routines are created and maintained (Feldman & Pentland, 2003; Wright, 2014), how legitimacy is established (De Vaujany & Vaast, 2016), and even how the morality of entire industries comes about (Anteby, 2010).

Within practice-based approaches, we align with studies, associated with the CCO tradition, which suggest it is through practices that discreet locales are woven together to create a coherent organisational landscape as action is moved through time and space (Cooren et al., 2005; Vásquez & Cooren, 2013; Vásquez, 2016). CCO researchers emphasise discourse in the constitution of organisations (e.g. Taylor & Van Every, 2000; McPhee, 2004; Grant et al., 2005; Schoeneborn, 2011), but they have also written extensively about the role of materiality in constitutive processes. Artefacts including documents (Cooren, 2004; Brummans, 2007; Vásquez et al., 2016), blackboards (Cooren & Bencherki, 2010), graduated sticks (Cooren & Matte, 2010), and measuring instruments (Bencherki, 2016) can play a part in making organising durable. We wish to extend this literature to show that this endurance proceeds not only from individual artefacts, but also from their assemblage and articulation. When assembled, artefacts gain relative properties, e.g. centrality or marginality, mobility or fixity, malleability or firmness, etc. These properties may favour or deter their ability to make practices durable. We propose that the common use of the term space – e.g. a work space or private space – is better understood as such an assemblage.

Thus, the question our study evolves into is how and to what extent space, understood as material assemblage, participates in organising (Weick, 1979; Czarniawska, 2005). We investigate this question by looking at two shared spaces used by artists and other professionals of all kinds. Shared spaces offer a unique opportunity to study the materiality of organising, as they face a unique paradox. Indeed, they strive to offer some of the resources usually provided by firms, such as communal spaces for socialisation and collaboration, a café, printers or other equipment. They also facilitate access to affordable workspace, and offer the possibility to share knowledge and foster collaboration across disciplines (Bøllingtoft, 2012; Pauwels et al., 2016). Therefore, they must elaborate means to coordinate the use of resources, and practices to enable cooperation and knowledge exchange. Yet, they precisely do not wish to employ conventional means to reach those goals, as they risk becoming ordinary organisations at the expense of each worker's independence.

The literature recognises that the practices of users of emerging shared spaces contribute to shaping these spaces. For instance, people may bring their own laptops, try different spots each time (Spinuzzi, 2012) or customise their work environments with various decorations (Sihvonen & Cnossen, 2015). Growing attention is being given to what takes place within such spaces; yet, how space itself makes a difference in providing durability to these practices, eventually leading to organising, has yet to be fully studied. While shared spaces may not be (formal) organisation in all cases, arguably they all show some level of 'organisationality' (Dobusch & Schoeneborn, 2015), and may be studied as forms of organising (Sillince, 2010). The analysis of ethnographic data from the two sites we present below suggests that it is precisely as spaces, or more precisely as the assemblage of the artefacts that compose them, that such creative hubs provide endurance to the relations that substantiate organising. Elucidating how shared spaces can count on their physical or material dimension for durable organising is particularly relevant for emergent collectives, where practices have yet to be institutionalised.

We take up this task by analysing ethnographic data gathered at two newly-established creative spaces in Amsterdam. Members of the first space, Fenix, had to move elsewhere after their landlord went bankrupt. The second, ACTA, was a newly-established space and needed to build a sense of community among its diverse tenants. Our analysis reveals that the two creative spaces faced these issues thanks to the material and semiotic dimensions of space, in agreement with Kuhn and Burk's (2014: 149) intuition that 'the relevance of physical space (i.e. sites) in organising is always already connected with symbolic activity'. Our findings demonstrate that space provides endurance to organising and, as such, constitutes organisations. We show that, while space is relationally and practically assembled, as an extensive literature shows

(Thrift, 1999; Massey, 2003), once it is assembled space also becomes constitutive of organising and makes emergent organisations (Taylor & Van Every, 2000) endure beyond the attributes of any of their components. Below, we will review the literature on the endurance of organising, and then proceed to suggest how space may play a role in this.

3.2 How Does Space Contribute to the Emergence and Endurance of Organising?

Most literature takes for granted that organisations are mostly stable. The question of how organisations can either change successfully or resist unexpected changes has been a dominant concern in organisation theory. An alternative view of organisations sees them as ever-changing (e.g. Tsoukas & Chia, 2002), and therefore in need of a steady ground to act and to endure in time (Farjoun, 2010). In this sense, stabilisation has been described, following structuration theory, as an interplay between structures and the individual actions through which they are both expressed and reproduced (Barley & Tolbert, 1997; McPhee, 2004). This interplay, most famously theorised as the 'duality of structure' (Giddens, 1984; see also McPhee & Zaug, 2009), takes the guise of the relationship between institutions and the 'institutional work' or 'social skills' that change and reinforce them simultaneously (Fligstein, 1997; Zundel et al., 2013).

A different approach focuses on conversations and other communication practices, and their materialisation into various texts, from documents to technological devices (Taylor et al., 1996). Organisational norms, procedures, values and other 'figures' are negotiated and constituted through conversations, and are made to last through inscription into texts (Taylor et al., 1996). These texts are, in turn, made relevant again in each situation through further conversations, thus allowing a new iterative cycle of negotiation (Cooren et al., 2007; Cooren, 2010). Some texts may become more authoritative than others, thus more or less allowing interpretive leeway for the renegotiation of organisational rules and figures (Kuhn, 2008; Koschmann, 2013). This perspective, known as CCO (Schoeneborn et al., 2014), is divided into several schools of thought (Putnam & Fairhurst, 2015), amongst which is the Montreal School (or TMS). TMS draws from actor-network theory the proposal that the durability of collective entities is attributable to the artefacts, objects and technologies that are involved in these entities (Cooren, 2004; Ashcraft et al., 2009; Cooren & Bencherki, 2010; Cooren, 2015). TMS, though, has yet to account for the way spaces in the more conventional sense of the word – rooms, offices, hallways, etc. – participate in the constitution and endurance of organisations. This extension of TMS rests on the recognition that each space is already an assemblage of artefacts and practices.

This view of space contrasts with many existing understandings of the notion. For instance, Taylor and Spicer (2007) distinguish three views of space: (1) space as distance and proximity (e.g. Hatch, 1978; Fayard & Weeks, 2007); (2) space as a materialisation of power relations (e.g. Wasserman & Frenkel, 2015; Courpasson, Dany & Delbridge, 2016); and (3) space as lived experience (e.g. Yanow, 1998; Panayiotou & Kafiris 2011; De Vaunjany & Vaast, 2014). Current understandings of space in organisation studies indeed tend to focus either on the effects of practice on space, or vice versa. For example, some studies focus on the effect of spatial features on collaboration, creativity or the sense of community (Haner, 2005; Ebbers, 2014; Garrett et al., 2017), thus imbuing these concrete spaces with agency (Yaneva, 2009). Other studies perceive space as the outcome of relations and practices (in line with Massey, 2003, and Lefebvre, 2011), for instance by looking at how gender performances (re)create ephemeral spaces (Tyler & Cohen, 2010).

We, however, propose not to distinguish between space and the practices that substantiate and materialise it (Cooren, 2010). This is possible by recognising that relations and practices are material, too; they exist to the extent that they take flesh in a body, that they are inscribed in a document or a piece of technology, or that they are spoken through the sound of one's voice. In that sense, there are no human relations, on the one hand, nor material assemblages of space, on the other. Both are on the same place of existence. What varies, though, is the strength or robustness of some associations (Latour, 1986b; Martine & Cooren, 2016). In that sense, and to pastiche Latour's (1986a) title, we can say that space is relations and practices made durable.

This entails that space is not a context for practice. Rather, space and practice account for each other reflexively (Rawls, 2005; Zemel & Koschmann, 2016). A coffee shop is not only chairs, tables and a counter, but also the coffee-drinking practices that make these artefacts meaningful. A group of people queuing in a coffee shop would need to account for their behaviour, in the same way that a bus stop would fail to be recognised as such if, instead of people queuing for the bus, it comprised groups of people talking and drinking coffee. Space is an assemblage of artefacts and practice, are therefore the two are not easily distinguishable. The difference between them lies only in the fact that tables, counters and coffee machines are more durable than the gestures of coffee drinkers. A bus stop is often little more than a sign with a number on it, but it serves again and again as a resource for people to agree on where to queue.

3.3 Methods & Empirical Setting

The study of organisational practice has typically relied on some version of ethnography, which allows 'representing the social reality of others through the analysis of one's own experience' (Van Maanen, 1988: xiii), but also the detailed observation of real-life activities, such as the micro-processes of routines (Feldman & Orlikowski, 2011) or the minutiae of collective document use (Vásquez, Schoeneborn, & Sergi, 2017). For instance, ethnography has served to study situated practices that scale up to a collective level (Nicolini, 2009; 2012), the circulation of organisational action from one site to another (Cooren, 2004b), as well as the stability and change of routines (Feldman, 2003). Indeed, ethnography is particularly well suited to operate 'zooming in and zooming out' effects that allow the connecting of singular practices to the broader organisational picture (Nicolini, 2012). On the other hand, ethnography has also served to observe closely the concreteness of materiality and space. For instance, it may reveal the way space serves as a setting for community-building or for interpretive practices (Yanow, 1998; Garrett et al., 2017), the part played in space in organisational legitimacy (De Vaujany & Vaast, 2014) or the meanings people give to space (Riach & Wilson, 2014). Since ethnography is suited to study both practice and space separately, it should also be a method of choice to account for their relation.

We are further comforted in our choice for ethnography by the fact that researchers, in particular in the CCO tradition, have regularly employed an ethnographic approach to show how artefacts contribute to the endurance of organisations. Ethnography has allowed these researchers to observe the tangible difference artefacts such as written documents, computer files or other instruments make in concrete situations (e.g. Cooren, 2004; Bencherki, 2016; Vásquez, Schoeneborn, & Sergi, 2016). In contrast to alternative methods, ethnography demands for the researcher to remain open to surprise and to look at familiar situations as if they were strange (Ybema & Kamsteeg, 2009). When such an attitude for serendipitous discovery is adopted, then the contribution of artefacts in our sociality can be noted. Similarly, as we understand space as an assemblage of artefacts, ethnography should likewise allow us to note how these assemblages participate in and relate with human practice.

Our empirical material is collected at two different shared spaces in Amsterdam. The municipality has a specific policy and budget to transform empty property into creative hubs (Peck, 2012). These buildings, partly funded by the city government, accommodate a variety of self-employed professionals, who mostly work in the creative or cultural industries (O'Connor, 2010). Since the first author conducted the

fieldwork, background on the empirical setting as well as the vignettes, will be told from her perspective.

In spring 2013, I learnt about two such creative hubs that were about to open in Amsterdam that same year, each very different in terms of location, target group and management.[10] I had an interest in the ways in which people could benefit from joining such places in terms of expanding their social network and starting collaborations. Access to both spaces was secured after preliminary visits to establish contacts with the initiators of the hubs. It was agreed that, from the autumn of the same year onwards, I would spend a two-month, full-time stint of ethnographic research in each space, after which I would pay follow-up visits to stay informed on recent developments. This continued until July 2014. During that time, I fully participated in the activities of each site, and even became a tenant at one of them. The move into this space was done partly out of academic interest, and partly as a result of an expiring lease in a former flat.

At both spaces, data were generated in various ways. First, field notes were taken following spontaneous conversations or first-hand experience through odd jobs such as delivering mail to the different studios. For this, I focused on content, but also on impressions of atmosphere, sensory input and the thoughts and questions emerging from interactions (Emerson, Fretz, & Shaw, 1995; Sunstein & Chiseri-Strater, 1997). I also distributed a list of questions asking tenants about their occupation, education, and their motivation for joining a creative hub. Furthermore, I conducted twenty-six open interviews. Each interview lasted between 45 minutes and two hours, and all were recorded and transcribed. Finally, conversations with the managers of each space and with policy-makers in charge of creative hubs for the city council provided contextual information.

The research approach was inductive and the back-and-forth between observations, interview data and literature was done in search of significant 'breakdowns' that threatened our understanding of the situation (Alvesson & Kärreman, 2011). At Fenix, the breakdown was the landlord's bankruptcy, which forced tenants to get organised. This drew our attention to the semiotic and social function of the containers people used there. At ACTA, an intriguing puzzle was presented by the ability to create cohesion among the apparently haphazard group of tenants, given the difficulty it had to open initially. The intense and prolonged involvement with ACTA made the research a case of 'observant participation' (Moeran, 2009) and 'at-home

[10] The researcher involved in fieldwork also conducted observations at a third space, which we excluded from the present study because it mostly rented space to small businesses, and therefore did not have the challenge of establishing an organisation out of a mass of strangers.

ethnography' (Alvesson, 2009). Because the second researcher was external to both sites, the conversation between the two researchers led to a form of 'collaborative auto-ethnography' (Chang, Ngunjiri, & Hernandez, 2013), i.e., an ongoing dialogue to help increase reflexivity as the second researcher moved across 'work-worlds' (Gilmore & Kenny, 2015). We then produced vignettes offering a 'variety of shapes, substances, transmutations, multi-dimensionalities, and angles of approach', following Richardson's (2000) description of ethnographic writing.

We wrote the vignettes in such a way as to focus on the issue of organisational continuity and to approach it from different angles, while setting aside the many aspects of organisational reality that necessarily took place, but were not directly relevant to the issue at hand, and without sacrificing the narrative thread (Sturdy et al., 2009: 66). Using an open coding technique, we then categorised and condensed those vignettes together, in order to identify the most relevant practices that took place (Kvale, 2006). We understand practices as recurring and purposeful (Nicolini, 2012), and as constitutive of larger social phenomena such as organisations (Schatzki, 2005). Our analysis specifically focuses on the practices that allow space, understood as an assemblage of material-semiotic artefacts, to participate in providing endurance to these two organisations, through tumultuous episodes.

3.4 Results: Two Vignettes

I. The Rebirth of the Fenix: Adapting to Change by Constituting Space through the Use and Arrangement of Containers

It was a cold autumn morning when the first time I visited the warehouse. I parked my bicycle on the side of a deserted industrial road in the city's outskirts and entered. What I found was an ensemble of big things: a sculpture made of metal, vans turned into food trucks, and woodworking equipment. The place was massive and scarcely lit, with very high ceilings. Large, rectangular, shipping containers were spread out evenly across the floor. Machines were moving and making noise, and stuff was being moved around. Out of a food truck, selling the typically Dutch chips with mayonnaise, an older gentleman emerged. The scene was not unlike market vendors setting up shop in the morning: each had their own little area, yet there was a sense of collectivity.

The manager, who was showing me around, pointed to a trailer on wheels, with windows, in the centre of the warehouse: 'There will be coffee here.' When the door opened, a wave of warmth greeted me: electrical heating. With Tom Waits' deep voice crooning from a speaker, the trailer felt like a cosy blanket. As I sat down at a

table close to the windows, the space filled up with more people, greeting each other enthusiastically whilst stepping through the narrow door. Even though it was halfway through the morning, it was clear that they were seeing each other for the first time today. Looking through the window from the inside out, I became aware of the contrast with the immense, cold and mostly empty space of the warehouse.

Once we had finished their coffee, the manager of the space introduced me to various artists in the warehouse. Each person working there had one of those shipping containers that they used as an office or as a workspace for mending, welding and scraping. Jesse, for instance, was working on large installations and used his container for storage while conducting the actual work on his dedicated spot next to it. Everyone's space is as big as two of, the open concrete space a negative of the box next to it. Many creatives use their containers to store the vestiges of projects past and to come. Artists invited me inside, through the metal doors on the short side of their containers. Depending on their profession, these insides would resemble a living room, an archive, a thrift shop or a cabinet of curiosities. The containers' limited size forced them to make decisions as to what could be preserved and what had to go, although they could sometimes store some things in one of their neighbours' containers for a while. The set-up gave the place an underground look. As furniture designer Otis said: 'With all those things lined up, it conveys a certain rough-looking image' (I1).

About six months after the first visit, the constellation as we describe it here was in crisis. The manager of the space had entered a legal conflict with the landlord. The lease was cancelled and people working in the space started moving to other locations. A pending issue was their financial deposits, which the management had already spent, leaving some people in the situation that they needed to move, but had zero cash to do so. It was during this period I started to attend the weekly meetings held by the remaining people. From a large, international and English-speaking group, the collective changed into a much smaller Dutch-speaking group, whose only international element was a local resident since the city's hippie heyday. Gradually, the idea of staying together began to take hold. The idea took shape during the group's weekly meeting, every Monday evening. Prefacing the meeting was a ritual foraging for cups and glasses in everyone's container to accommodate for drinks, while other people improvised lighting from lingering electrical cords. Assembling these materials necessities set the tone for the meeting: everyone was a co-constructor of the collective effort, however modest.

A filmmaker with community organising experience, and Otis, a former banker turned furniture designer, drafted a plan for a new space they called 'Fenix'. They were unintimidated by regulations and endless spreadsheets, but their efforts at convincing the others were met with a mixture of interest and concern. 'I have literally

zero euro in my bank account,' said a young artist, worried about the costs of moving. 'I have good assignments coming my way and I must have a studio up and running next month,' said someone else. 'Someone in the group had been using his deposit for maybe 15 years already, moving from place to place with that money,' said Otis in an interview later, clarifying the severity of the situation (I1). The deadline to vacate was imminent, and eventually the two leaders secured funding from the city council and were eying a warehouse a further down the road, similar in size, and empty.

The final pieces of the puzzle came together when a solution was found for the financial deposits. The former managing organisation, now officially bankrupt, would donate the remaining inventory, including the containers and café-trailer, to the tenants by way of compensation. These materials thus switched from flotsam to property, and would be coming along. This meant more than storage space: the spatial and material set-up, which had been giving shape to their organisation, could be reproduced elsewhere. The warehouse they would move into was nearby, similar in size, and taking all this with them would allow for the nearly exact reproduction of their social habits. People started to discuss whether they would have the same neighbours, or whether they preferred being closer to the entrance, as it was now taken for granted that the new space would resemble the old. The café trailer would be there too, and the same type of storage solutions would be found. General meetings would again take place in the middle of the warehouse, using foldable chairs and benches. In other words, the relational constitution of the community was done through the spatial and material arrangements that were already there.

Figure 1: The containers placed next to each other in the new space just after the move.

Here we see how physical space and material things – more precisely: shipping containers spread across a warehouse – contributes to maintaining the social relations between people. But what is more, they also actively reinforced them. In June, during the weekly meeting prior to the scheduled move down the road, it appeared that not all members of the group were completely informed of what was coming, especially since some people had been away in the previous weeks. At the meeting, a member of the core group said: 'Everyone has to mark their container tonight.' Clear instructions were given to the rest of the group to make everything ready for the move the same evening. People started packing their things into the containers, which went from offices and studios, back to their intended use, i.e., storing and moving cumbersome objects. Once the containers were labelled with each person's name, the creative space had folded into the containers that served as its organising principle and were now dispersed in a large, empty factory. This led to the realization that, after many months of talking, it was really about to happen. Previous meetings had been about whether their new location would actually be available. Different places were discussed, and even once the warehouse down the road was chosen, it remained unclear for at least a month whether the move would at all be possible. 'It still feels like a dream to me,' a young artist said about the upcoming move. When people understood that they had to pack and mark their belongings now, the material arrangement and spatial setting ensured the reproduction and reinforcement of the community.

Figure 2: The newly decorated floor in between two containers in the new space.

A few months after the move, I arrived at the new space to attend the weekly meeting. What I found was a somewhat different, but strikingly similar set-up, in which the shipping containers were scattered across the warehouse with plots next to each

of them. People were painting the floor and laying new concrete wherever necessary. Everyone seemed to be taking care of the rectangular shape next to their container as if it were a garden in front of a house. When the group gathered, everyone emerged from their own container, as before, or arrived from outside if they were only dropping by for the meeting. Just as in the previous space, the meeting was held on neutral ground, meaning not in anyone's trailer, but at the front of the warehouse. Just as in the previous space, chairs and a table had to be improvised from whatever was around, and cups and glasses were brought from wherever they were found.

II. The Endearing Chicken: Integrating Diverse People through a Circulating Image

The ACTA building seemed an unlikely candidate to be turned into a creative hub at the beginning of 2012. The 1960s building was brown, grey and dark green, and did not do much to please the eye. To top it off, half of it was contaminated with asbestos, severely delaying its transformation into a creative space. The creative hub opened in several phases. The first to be made available for rental were the former administrative offices of the hospital, and it was only 18 months later that the rest of the building became habitable. During this period, I could witness the challenge that came from integrating those different spaces into a coherent whole. Four years down the line, tenants still refer to themselves and others as part of 'phase 1' or 'phase 2'. The spatial set-up of the building, combined with the fact that the people in phase 1 had already become a community, made integration of these two groups an ongoing endeavour. This difficulty was compounded by the fact that the managing organisation, Urban Resort, had to adopt looser selection criteria to find new tenants. A multimedia artist described it as follows: 'From those who were initially selected, more and more said no because they had already found another studio [when phase 2 opened]. This triggered a strange sort of compensation [and] suddenly we were facing the fact that Urban Resort had trouble finding people' (I2).

A few months after the first tenants had started to move, a massive chicken appeared on the top of the building, a tell-tale sign that something fun was going on here, in this seemingly innocuous building. Painted bright blue, it was a rare mark of colour in an otherwise dull district. Its size, hand-drawn contours and absence of letters indicated this was not some company's logo, while its unambiguous shape suggested it was not a hermetic art work either.

Around the time of the chicken's appearance, in spring 2013, I moved into the ACTA building. My living quarters came with a small workspace, perfectly suited for writing and studying, situated between the studio of a Greek snare instrument builder,

a jewellery designer, a Russian laser artist and a duo of DJs. As many people had recently moved into the building, everything had yet to find its place. Wood, textile, and paint were carried around. Musicians, producers, composers and DJs had to soundproof their space, resulting in intense construction work of varying professionalism. Tools were swapped, phone chargers borrowed, and the common pantries stacked with second-hand cups, cutlery and dishes. Amidst it all, the chicken quietly followed its own trajectory. It now had little brothers and sisters of all shapes, spray-painted on corridor floors and on doors, sometimes as a crossbreed with a rabbit or a dinosaur. Every week a new one would appear, above a bookshelf or at the bottom of a doorpost.

Figure 3: The chicken at the entrance of a toilet inside the 'phase 1' part of the ACTA building.

While I was unpacking boxes, the technical manager, Remko, walked in. Our chat turned to the chicken, and he explained it had been his project. 'It's a bit of a joke obviously, I just wanted to do it. From when we started the place, it was just us, you know.' The 'us' referred to Lisa, the rental and community manager, and himself. Though he was a graphic designer by training, people trusted Remko with all technical issues, and no construction project intimidated him. He worked for Urban Resort, as did Lisa, but felt something of a free agent: 'They [Urban Resort staff] do not come around a lot. So, I just wanted to do something that was really about this place and the people who make it, you know,' Remko said about the chicken. 'It is becoming a little bit like an unofficial logo,' he added.

Then, on 13 June 2013, an official opening of the ACTA was organised to showcase the building's new activities to neighbourhood residents and to the culture-loving

public. Preparations had been going on for months, led by a tenants' committee, assisted by Urban Resort staff. One of them, a recently graduated artist, felt honoured to be involved in this, thus illustrating the attachment tenants were starting to feel to the place: 'A lot of other people could have taken on the task of organising this festival too, but still, they [Urban Resort people] saw this is me' (I4). Musicians from the building performed and artists showed their work. Another tenant, an independent consultant, was fascinated by the way the chicken was becoming ACTA's anti-logo. Together with Remko, she started making T-shirts adorned with various incarnations of the chicken, in different colours. She set up a stand during the festival and sold about a dozen to tenants and visitors, but mainly to Urban Resort employees. Already the chicken had made it from being an individual creative project to a recognised symbol for the ACTA building. One person also said: 'I had the need to become part of something larger. I was hoping for a community. It is only the beginning, but already with a few people [...], a community is emerging' (I2).

Figure 4: The chicken printed on a t-shirt as a crossbreed with a dinosaur, worn by its originator.

Although the chicken was now not only visible on walls and doors, but also on the users of the space as they walked around the building's various spaces, its reproduction still relied on its designer. This changed when, after the summer of 2013, Remko fell ill and stayed on sick leave for a year. This was the period when the first author conducted her official fieldwork (in addition to being a resident) and witnessed the chicken in more and more places, and being responded to enthusiastically by more and more people in the growing ACTA community.

First, in September 2013, Lisa asked a design studio residing in the building to create a website showcasing the profiles of all tenants and general information about

the space.[11] During one of the tenants' monthly meetings, the designers asked everyone to vote on one of the three mock-ups they presented. All of them featured the chicken, without this having been required, or even suggested, demonstrating the force of the image. But the chicken really started to prove itself when, in January 2014, the second phase of the renovation was finally complete.

The building's capacity doubled, creating an influx of new people. Some people felt that the sense of community was threatened, and the managing organisation did not do enough to counter that: 'I think that, in reality, there is not so much communication going on between the people who are using this place. They come down there, but they don't really talk to each other that much, there are not many opportunities to really gather round except for the gathering once a month, at which a small percentage of people usually show up' (I3). The original group of tenants, residing in the part of the building known as phase 1, regularly spoke about plans for redecorations or painting. As the incoming tenants doubled ACTA's population, it became impossible to take such decisions through oral conversations. In addition, there was a central entrance, but tenants of each phase had to go in opposite directions as soon as they went through the front door, making spontaneous encounters unlikely.

Certain things were done to deal with the impact of the sudden doubling in size. For instance, a monthly borrol was organised, the term being a pun on the Dutch word for an alcoholic beverage (borrel), and the verb to roll (rol). A shopping trolley was stacked with beer and other drinks, and pushed down the corridors, inviting people to come along on a tour. The gradually expanding group stopped off at studios for a peek, and often the artists working there would say a few words about their work. As they did, people discovered the space, became acquainted with new corners of the building and, incidentally, got to recognise the chicken throughout. I took part in a few borrols and was amazed at the building's diversity and size, but also at the chicken's anchoring effect. It gave a sense of continuity throughout the collective exploration, and perpetuated the feeling of being part of the same thing. Of course, it did not do so alone: Besides the human effort to reproduce or even reinvent the chicken, its effect relied on opening doors, rolling wheels of shopping carts, and – prominently – beer.

The increase in size also meant things were less easily controlled and, as a result, remainders from projects would be left unattended in the hallways, or plants would disappear. People urged one another to clean up or bring things back. Being part of a large building with a lot of freedom to decorate the hallways resulted in initiatives for temporary installations, such as a book swap corner and a video installation where tenants could display video art of their choosing or showcase their own work.

The sheer size of the building allowed for such initiatives, and seeing these dynamic spatial installations constantly reminded tenants of the fact that they were part of a shared space. One tenant, a fashion designer, took on the main cleaning tasks against payment from Urban Resort, but residents also shared responsibility for the common space. Since no clear mechanisms or rules existed except to take care of the building jointly, it was the building's evolving state and relative messiness that reminded tenants of their duties.

The chicken was part of this larger web of things keeping ACTA together, but it did get to play a front-stage part; for instance, when a collective of fashion designers moved into the building, they called themselves The Sewing Chickies and adorned their studio space, flyers and online announcements with images of chickens. They moved into ACTA without knowing the designer of the chicken, or even knowing that the chicken had begun as a personal creative project.

Figure 5: The chicken in one of its many shapes around the ACTA building.

The ACTA building's tenants were able to make up, at least in part, for the lack of internal integration, thanks to the chicken that they adopted and reproduced even while its originator, Remko, was absent, but also through a variety of activities through which they explored and maintained their shared space. As they strolled down corridors with a trolley full of alcohol to meet their fellow tenants, or as they drew each other's attention to areas in need of repair, they were both responding to the demands of a space they occupied and reinventing it to make it meaningful

[11] www.actagebouw.nl

for themselves. This worked so well that the final expansion of the chicken's territory, after T-shirts, websites and company names, came from a surprising direction: Students living in a residential hall next to the creative hub initiated a monthly magazine. The students were fascinated by their Bohemian neighbours and adopted the chicken as their magazine's logo. ACTA tenants applauded the students' adoption of the chicken. A visual artist called it 'very endearing', and the independent consultant who sold the T-shirts mentioned that Remko, who was still on leave, 'had always suspected the chicken was here to stay'.

3.5 Analysis: How Space and Practice Account for One Another Reflexively

The two cases reveal how occupants of space engaged in practices that did not merely take place within space, or constituted space (in the sense of Thrift, 1999, and Massey, 2003), but that also brought space into the process of constituting and maintaining their organisation. Indeed, rather than situating space either as a constraint to human activity, or as its outcome, our data show the intricacy of relations that people entertain with space, as they strive to reach a variety of work-related or creative goals. Indeed, using a trailer as a café, trading storage space, disseminating an image to give meaning to a building, exploring its corridors with a beer-packed trolley, or pointing out areas that need maintenance, are all practices through which people engage with space, but which cannot be reduced to either being constrained by space, or constituting it. These practices can be usefully sorted into three categories that help us to understand how space and practice reflexively account for each other, and contribute to organising.

	Fenix		ACTA	
How space shapes practice	The central trailer serves as a meeting point and as a coffee space.	The size of the warehouse, in relation to that of each container, means that each tenant has both a container and a spot of the same size next to it.	The building being contaminated with asbestos means that it opens in phases, creating a distinction between phase 1 and phase 2 tenants.	Being old and somewhat decrepit, the building regularly needs repairs and maintenance work.
How practice shapes space	People have the habit of visiting the central trailer to drink coffee. Music and coffee make the trailer hospitable and welcoming.	Shipping containers serve as storage and as (heated) office space, while the spot next to it may serve as an actual workspace. Tenants trade space among one another. If one person has some room left, s/he may offer this as storage for someone else's project.	The chicken, while initiated by Remko, is a collective effort to appropriate the building and create a sense of continuity through its various parts. Rolling drinks help tenants discover new parts of the building.	Music and sound artists soundproof their studios. Tenants coordinate to ask for and perform the maintenance work that has to be done, and to trade surplus material of all kind.
How space and practice account for each other	The trailer and containers both make some actions possible and are defined by those practices: the coffee ritual in the trailer, the use of the containers as storage in contrast to the empty lot next to them, etc. The relative position of the containers creates a central space where the café can be placed, offers individual lots where people can work and allows for a 'neutral' zone where meetings can be held. That is why, in the new space, the containers and trailer help recreate the same social configuration.		Because the building's two phases make chance encounters difficult, tenants organise regular social activities, such as the rolling drinks, and give great importance to symbols like the chicken, which is reproduced throughout the building. These activities both take advantage of the building's long corridors, and contribute to giving them a new, collective meaning. Also, the old building, with its small rooms and messy corners, creates an economy of sharing and caring for the building, which reinforces the need to collaborate with each other and invites people to improve the building creatively (for example with the book swap corner).	

Table 2: Examples of the Spatial Practices of Organising.

How Space Shapes Practice

From our data, several cases may be pointed out where space shaped practices. For instance, in the Fenix case, the coffee trailer, which was centrally positioned and heated, constituted a central meeting point where people would congregate. The big warehouse allowed each person to have a lot next to their container, which they used as an additional work space. People would also regularly invite each other to their container, which could serve as a workshop, an exhibition hall or an office. In some cases, the lack of space meant people would have to store their things in another person's container, sometimes in exchange for some form of compensation. The availability of a 'neutral zone' away from any one person's container meant it was the perfect location for meetings.

At ACTA, the contamination with asbestos and the renovation works that were needed to fix this in some parts of the building, effectively forced people to enter in two phases, and segregated both groups. The age and state of the building demands regular maintenance from all tenants, and its long corridors mean that people are likely to continue discovering new corners even after being tenants for a while. The large size of the building meant that many new people were brought in when the second phase opened, creating important integration issues among tenants.

How Practice Shapes Space

The practices of people also shape space and infuse it with meaning. At Fenix, the fact that people used the central trailer to make coffee, that they played soothing music there, constituted that place as the café and everyone's meeting place, and not only as a heated space that happened to be in the middle. Visiting each other's containers went from an initial curiosity to understand what others did with that space, to a social ritual that confirmed the containers as each artist's home within the warehouse. The scavenging for cups and the fixing of lights before each meeting also helped provide a sense of collectivity to the very place where important decisions would be jointly made, in addition to connecting this meeting place with the whole warehouse as people would be exploring each other's containers in search of cups. Finally, by trading space, artists embedded the containers into their social fabric, as portions of their container could actually be lent to someone else, thus giving a different meaning to those big metal boxes according to different projects, artworks and individuals.

At ACTA, tenants would often share leftover material and equipment from projects, which meant materials were moving around the space, and sometimes abandoned in

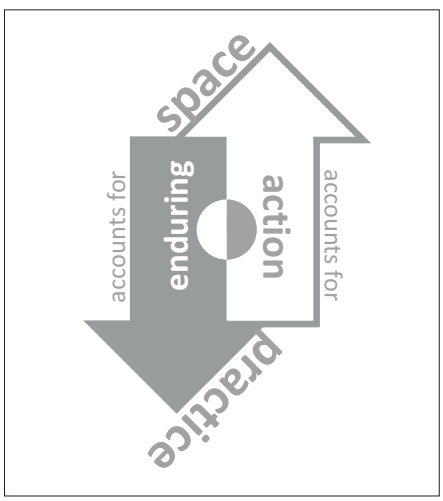
a corridor. If something was temporarily lingering in the hallways, this would provide visual clues as to what types of projects people were working on, and confirm the building's significance as a buzzing hub of creative activity. On the other hand, the common work exerted in maintaining the building was an opportunity to meet others and discus possibilities for improvement, for instance by setting up screens to display video art. The borrol and the chicken's many mutations were, for their part, an invitation to connect the various corners of the building, either by strolling around and discovering what was being done, or by offering visual coherence to the otherwise desultory building. The consultant's T-shirts, The Sewing Chickies and the student magazine all exemplified practices by which the building was infused with a coherent meaning.

Organising as the Reflexive Relation between Space and Practice

The reflexive relationship between the ways in which space constrains or affords practices, on the one hand, and the ways in which practices left their mark on space, on the other, is what kept the wheel of the two collectives turning. At Fenix, for instance, the café trailer was both made possible by its centrality, and made meaningful as a café by the practices that took place within it – from the actual making of coffee to the music and so forth (otherwise it would just be a centrally-located metal box). This reflexive relationship is particularly obvious in the case of the lots artists use as extra work space, whose existence as lots both relies on the fact that unoccupied space is available between containers, but also because of the work that is conducted there – otherwise is would just be empty space. Similarly, the weekly meeting that began to take place once it became necessary to coordinate the move took place in a similar way each week both because it took place at the same spot in the warehouse, away from any one person's container and with bad lighting, thus perpetuating the ritual of looking for cups all around the warehouse, and of fixing the electric cords, but it is precisely those rituals, along with the unfolding of the meeting as such, that made this particular spot recognizable as the meeting space, nicknamed the neutral zone. When it became clear that the group would have to move, the remaining tenants began to hold a weekly meeting to discuss the logistics of the move, the financial and funding aspects, as well as establishing rules for the new space. In particular, a turning point for Fenix consisted in the decision, during one of those meetings, that the very evening, everyone would have to finish packing their things in their respective containers, and mark it so as to facilitate the move. The meeting, as an organising practice, therefore took place within the space, fostered discussions about the space, but also involved interaction with the space.

At ACTA, the building's important constraints on people's ability to socialise both made the borrol and the chicken necessary, and were made relevant by those two sets of practices. Indeed, the building would not have appeared as such an impediment to socialisation if people were happy to remain in their own rooms, as is the case in many office buildings. The borrol, for instance, was simultaneously a way to overcome isolation and discover the building, and precisely took advantage of the building's labyrinthine corridors and nooks and crannies, as the fun of the event was exactly to explore together. The borrol would not have the same meaning in a different space, and conversely the space would not have the same meaning without the borrol.

Similarly, the chicken's appearance on top of the dreary building, and in the many intricate corners of its corridors, is what made it such an engaging project. It was not just a logo; it was breadcrumbs left to be discovered and a refreshing contrast to (and arguably a form of critique of) the building's general appearance. The chicken therefore meant something specific in this particular building, and the way people engaged with by multiplying its forms and crossbreeds reflects this festive meaning. The chicken, however, also gave a different meaning to the space: the corridors became a chance for exploration and discovery, places where the chicken could pop up at any time, and people could appropriate and subvert them thanks to creativity – and creativity was the whole point of getting together in that building. This appropriation of the building was also apparent in the way people left material in the hallways and shared it, but also contributed together to the maintenance of the building. These practices were made necessary because of the small size of the rooms, which did not allow each person to store extra material in their space, and because the age of the building required a collective effort for it to be maintained. However, the people also imbued the building with a sense of buzzing collectivity, as seeing the materials in the hallway showed who was working on what, and working on the building's maintenance together was also a chance to consider how things could be different, for example by creating a book swap project.



Model 1. Organising as the reflexive relation between space and practice.

The analysis of the two cases shows that it is not only the properties of any single artefact which provides endurance to practices, but also space understood as the assemblage of artefacts: the way the shipping containers are laid out in the warehouse; the fact that they are large enough to accommodate a workshop or an office; and the fact that there is room for a lot next to them. At ACTA, it is the age of the building, its contamination with asbestos, and the fact that the building separates into two parts after the entrance, and its corridors are long and tortuous. However, the physical properties of those assemblages only tell half of the story. What they mean (and indeed what they are, like a café) depends on what practices take place within them, as much as they constrain or facilitate those same practices. That is why we propose that practice and space reflexively account for each other. Model 1 attempts to capture this idea.

3.6 Discussion and Conclusion

Our data show how space plays a part in the constitution and endurance of organisational practices, beyond the current focus on innovative practices (Peschl & Fundneider, 2012; Capdevila, 2015; Gandini, 2015) or on the effect of space on interaction (Fayard & Weeks, 2007). Our findings offer some unity to current research on space by showing how it plays a part in various organising practices, such as coordination (Garrett et al., 2017), networking (Ebbers, 2014) or mobilising (Valli, 2015). We argue that each time, these practices emerge through people's engagement with space. In other words, the organisational dimension of creative spaces does not emerge in the abstract, or through seemingly disincarnate interactions, but rather through their common orientation towards a shared space, whether it is as they explore it with a beer in their hand, as they maintain it or as they meet to discuss about it.

Our data reveal that the endurance of practices not only proceeds from their inscription into artefacts (Akrich, 1992), but also from their iterative character in their engagement with space (Derrida, 1988). Indeed, meeting often at the same spot makes it the meeting place, having coffee in the same trailer makes it the café, and working on a parcel of concrete makes it a lot. Reciprocally, the lot is where you work, the café is where you go to get coffee, and the meeting place is where you meet. While nuancing an over-emphasis on the physical nature of a single artefact, our data also suggest being cautious not to over-emphasise sense-making and discourse. Indeed, the very tangible nature of the practices we described – walking around, moving and fixing things, drawing chickens – shows that engaging with space is not merely an issue of talking about it or understanding it in one way or another, but also a (socio-)material process

of assembling, similar to Latour's (2005) use of the word. Said otherwise, the reflexive relation between space and practice also takes the form of concrete, situated action.

Our findings both align and extend current research on the role of discourse and communication in the constitution of organisations. While that literature increasingly acknowledges the role of materiality in these constitutive processes (Cooren & Bencherki, 2010; Cooren & Matte, 2010), studies still mostly concern either artefacts that are communicational in nature, in the sense that they carry linguistic signs or other marks (such as a blackboard or a measuring stick), or the interactions that lead participants to use, interpret or design artefacts in one way or another. This may have to do with this tradition's reliance on conversation analysis or similar discourse-analytical methods, which tend to stress the role of language at the expense of other practices (Bencherki, 2016; Wilhoit, 2016). Our findings, in contrast, respond to Kuhn and Burk's (2014) call to consider the physical dimension of space, through empirical examples of how organisational practices do not solely rely on conversations and verbal language, but also on concrete engagement with materiality, including with space.

The choice of our two cases reveals that their spatial features led people to participate in organising practices even though they were not organisations as such. Occupying space, exploring it, maintaining it, sharing it, moving it: All of these require coordination, planning and other organisational performances to be carried out. People met to talk about space in recognisably similar ways from one week to the next, they worked on the same lots, they recreated their collective elsewhere in a similar way, they maintained their building together, they organised events to foster socialisation and they even branded their building. Space should therefore be understood not only as a setting where organising takes place, but also as a key component of organisational constitution, existence and action. On the other hand, space should not only be understood as an outcome of practice either. Our analysis shows that putting the emphasis either on physicality or on discourse, or either on space as context or as outcome, misses the way space can exist according to multiple modes of existence at once: indeed, it is the physical context of action, but it is also defined through those very actions. This simultaneity is only a mystery to those who fail to understand space as an assemblage and wish to reduce it to specific objects.

4

Boundaries on The Move
A Communication-Centred Approach to the Boundaries of an Artistic Organisation[12]

Abstract

By examining ethnographic data from a community art organisation called Breeding Streets, we show how organisational boundaries enabled the organisation, at different times, to host other organisations, to explicitly include people as its members while excluding them in other instances, and to isolate or unite parts of the organisation at moments when this was strategically useful. Following the CCO premise, we propose that if organisations are continuously constituted through communication, then so must be their boundaries. This leads us to suggest that organisational boundaries should not be understood in spatial, graphical terms, but as products of language. Our study contributes by documenting the elasticity of organisational boundaries and linking it explicitly to the role of communication in organising. We argue that conceptualising boundaries from a communication-centred perspective allows us to suggest that such elasticity is inherently part of the properties of organisations, and that such elasticity can be productive for action in other organised settings.

[12] This chapter is the result of joint work with Viviane Sergi.

4.1 Introduction

We live in an era that challenges assumptions about what counts as an organisation. Terms such as temporary organising (Jacobsson, Lundin, & Soederholm, 2015; Bakker, DeFillippi, & Sydow, 2016), the project-based organisation (Peticca-Harris, Weststar, & McKenna, 2015), organisational fluidity (Schreyögg & Sydow, 2010), the boundaryless organisation (Cross, Yan, & Louis, 2000), organisational permeability (Colignon, 1984), and the network firm (Whitford & Zirpoli, 2016) have all pointed at the myriad forms organisations can take. Moreover, in the context of growing digitalisation, mobile technologies blur the boundary between work and non-work (Hislop & Axtell, 2011). Organisational space exists as much online as offline (Pratt, 2002), and large companies have started to place teams in other, more innovative, environments such as coworking spaces (Salovaara, 2015).

All of these changes point toward an organisation that seems to flicker through time and space. The study of the temporariness and the spatial dispersion of organisations has led to a reconceptualisation of several organisational dimensions, one of which is organisational boundaries. Santos and Eisenhardt have pointed out that the research agenda on organisational boundaries is still limited and heavily influenced by a transaction cost economics framework and that this is unfortunate given that 'a broader view of boundaries can fuel a deeper understanding of organisations' (2005: 491). Others have pointed out that an 'organization […] evolves through the processes of boundary setting' (Hernes, 2004: 10). Positioning ourselves in the research on these 'flexible' forms of organisations, our study focusses precisely on their boundaries. Intuitively, we will argue, boundaries are imagined graphically, as lines – however porous or flexible these may be – drawn in space. We, however, want to show that although organisational boundaries are often subject to legal and financial mechanisms, it is through language that they are continuously drawn, redrawn, and challenged. Drawing attention to the ambiguous nature of language and its effect on organising (Vasquez, Schoeneborn, & Sergi, 2015), we ask what happens with organisational boundaries if these are invoked through language.

Our inquiry is inspired by recent work in the field of organisational communication, more specifically the CCO approach. For some years, researchers working within this framework have been pursuing an inquiry on what organisations are, starting from the premise that organisations exist in, and as a result of, communication (e.g. Taylor & Van Every, 2000; 2011; McPhee, 2004; Grant et al., 2005; Cooren et al., 2011; Schoeneborn, 2011). For example, researchers working within this framework have looked at the role of talk and text (Taylor & Van Every, 2011: 13), as well as at material objects and technologies, to show how these things participate in organising and

how they eventually may be constitutive of what we label 'an organisation' (Cooren, 2004; Cooren & Matte, 2010; Bencherki, 2016; Vásquez, Schoeneborn, & Sergi, 2016). However, what this research has not addressed so far is how it is possible that human and nonhuman actors (such as material objects, internal documents, projects, or other organised activities) may at one point be seen as participating in the constitution of the organisation, while being seen as separate from the organisation in other instances. In other words, these ideas lead us to recognise that what makes up the organisation in one moment, may not make it up in the next. Therefore, in this chapter we explore the following question: if organisations are constituted and reconstituted through communication, how are organisational boundaries talked about, mobilised, and drawn? In other words, if indeed the organisation is talked into being (Taylor & Van Every, 2000), what does this mean for organisational boundaries?

This inquiry stems from the ethnographic investigation of an organisation that is flexible in many of the aforementioned ways. The mission of Breeding Streets – the focal organisation of this chapter – was to place artists in disadvantaged neighbourhoods in the northern part of Amsterdam, and to foster artistic projects in these neighbourhoods. The organisation was embedded in, or adjacent to, other organisational entities; it spread across dispersed locations; and encompassed members with various professional profiles, who explained its goals and tasks in very different terms. No one was formally employed by the organisation, yet many individuals were members of it. There were no headquarters, no office hours, not even a phone number to reach the organisation. The actors involved knew they were linked to Breeding Streets on a temporary basis, since funding was given – or not – every year anew. The organisation officially existed between 2009 and 2015, although some of its activities still continue today under different names, and disjointed from a common denominator. This fieldwork and ongoing analysis led us to quickly note that Breeding Streets exhibited unusual properties as an organisation. Indeed, it seemed to expand and to contract frequently; in other words, we noted that organising at Breeding Streets produced a different organisation at different times. This characteristic was not simply linked to the fact that Breeding Streets resembled a project-based organisation (Thiry & Deguire, 2007), where projects come and go, which may affect the dimensions of the organisation's membership and activities. In some instances, all artists, volunteers, and other participants were drawn into Breeding Streets, thus helping constitute the organisation, while in other instances the organisation was narrowly defined as only consisting of its sole manager. The changes between these moments were rapid and, as we shall demonstrate, sometimes occurred in the same meeting, producing various effects.

Trying to understand this particular organisation, the CCO approach offers us a theoretical and conceptual basis to think in a different fashion about its organisational boundaries. Following the CCO premise, we propose that if organisations are continuously performed, communicatively, then so must be their boundaries. This leads us to suggest that organisational boundaries should not be understood in spatial, graphical terms, but as products of language. To explore this idea of organisational boundaries as constituted through communication, we will mobilise vignettes taken from the ethnographic study of Breeding Streets. Taken together, these vignettes will show that, because of their continuously shifting nature, organisational boundaries enabled the organisation, at different times, to host other organisations, to explicitly include people as its members while excluding them in other instances, and to isolate or unite parts of the organisation at moments when this was strategically useful. With our empirical research, we aim to extend the recent work on partial organisation (Ahrne & Brunsson, 2011; Ahrne, Brunsson, & Seidl, 2016; Apelt et al., 2017; Ahrne, Brunsson, & Seidl, 2017). We do so by showing that, while Breeding Streets had some aspects of a formal organisation and lacked others, interconnected instances of decision-making were at its core. Before turning our attention to the empirical material, we first start by discussing recent scholarship on the communicative constitution of organisations (CCO), in order to then suggest how we might reconceptualise organisational boundaries through a CCO approach.

4.2 The Organisation As Constituted Through Communication

Underpinning much research on organisations is the idea 'that there exists something that can be called an organization' (Rafaeli, 1997: 122). Indeed, a classic and highly influential theory of the firm, transaction cost economics, holds that the reason for an organisation's existence is the efficiency of integrating certain activities over outsourcing them in the market (Coase, 1937). The contributions of March and Simon (1958), while at the time highly valuable for questioning assumptions in classic organisational theory to do with, for instance, individuals' capacity to process information and the role of motivation and identification, still conceptualised that each individual had to decide to 'enter' the confines of some pre-existing thing, called the organisation (Form, 1959).

Ever since, research has pointed out that exactly what organisations are made of, and where they begin and end, is not that clear-cut. Much research focusing on novel forms of organising, often facilitated by the possibilities of online and mobile communication, and the increased mobility of high-skilled workers as a result thereof,

has somewhat nuanced the generalised conception – heavily influenced by systems theory's imprint on organisation theory (Czarniawska, 2008; 2013) – that the organisation is an entity floating in an environment that is neatly distinct from it (Hernes, 2004). At the same time, this dualism between the organisation on the one hand, and the environment on the other, is often maintained in such research – for instance in research examining the potential of organisational fluidity as a way to deal with highly volatile environments (Schreyögg & Sydow, 2010). Furthermore, research on modularity theory (Baldwin & Clark, 2000; D'Adderio & Pollock, 2014), inter-organisational collaboration (Hardy, Phillips, & Lawrence, 2003), and boundary-spanning activities (O'Mahony & Bechky, 2008; Mørk et al., 2012) have all proposed that the elements that make up organisations are more loosely coupled, bringing nuance to the idea that the organisation is a single entity and showing how interactions across the organisation's boundaries impact what goes on within the organisation (e.g. Barley, 2015). Still, within all this research, the basic premise that the organisation is something that has an identifiable beginning and endpoint perseveres.

Starting from a different perspective, it is possible to conceive organisations in a much more processual way. Anchored in process ontology (Rescher, 2008), this perspective considers that organisations are only temporary results of ongoing practices and processes, and therefore ever-changing (Tsoukas & Chia, 2002; Langley et al., 2013; Helin et al., 2014). According to this view, organisations are 'reifications of processes' (Langley et al., 2013: 4), and neither change nor transformation are exceptions to an otherwise stable state. Rather, things are never static, only temporary solidifications of ongoing flows, akin to Spinoza's understanding of the body as a 'dynamic composition of movement and rest' (Helin et al., 2014: 9). Adopting the view that organisations are outcomes of action, or temporary reifications, brings up the question of what it is that makes them endure. Scholars have indeed pointed to the need for processes that give endurance (e.g. Farjoun, 2010), yet process views of organisations risk creating confusion as to what organising, or organisations, are. If they are temporary stabilisations, or a type of shorthand for interrelated processes, but without any unique essence that maintains itself, then what distinguishes our object of study from other types of social groups?

An answer to this question is beginning to be formulated by a theoretical approach known as CCO (Taylor & Van Every, 2000; 2011; Cooren et al., 2011; Schoeneborn & Vásquez, 2017). From its inception, this approach has focused on conversations and various communication practices, and their materialisation into texts of all kinds, from documents to technological devices (Taylor et al., 1996). One of CCO's central ideas is that everything that makes up the organisation – norms, procedures, values – is negotiated and constituted through conversations, and is made to last through

inscription into texts. These texts are then invoked in situations through further conversations, which allows for an opportunity to negotiate the authority of the texts (Cooren et al., 2007; Cooren, 2010). Hence, CCO contributes to the structure-agency debate by proposing that it is texts that afford and guide agency, while the actions that are performed may either lead to a change in the texts that are 'available' to be invoked, or to a further reinforcement of the authority of certain texts (Koschmann, 2013).

As such, CCO has begun to develop a new theory of organisations, by proposing that they are made of communication, in the sense that they are 'existentially communicative' (Kuhn, 2017: 144). It is through communication, understood as being simultaneously discursive and material (Cooren et al., 2012; Brummans et al., 2014; Cooren, 2015;), that the organisation emerges, is negotiated, and is reproduced or modified (Ashcraft, Kuhn & Cooren, 2009; Schoeneborn & Vásquez, 2017). CCO, therefore, places communication at the heart of the process of organising, exploring the implications of viewing communication not as a conduit, but as 'constitutive of the way any being happens to exist more or less' (Cooren, 2015: 307).

Thus, the CCO approach asks a seemingly simple question: what is an organisation? To this question, this body of research proposes that the organisation – or social forms that are organisational in various aspects (Sillince, 2010; Dobusch & Schoeneborn, 2015) – is constituted through communication. Performing the organisation not only happens through the 'material effects of discursive practices' (Gond et al., 2015: 2), but also by taking seriously the idea that non-humans contribute to these processes (Cooren & Bencherki, 2010; Cooren, Fairhurst, & Huët, 2012), that they make a difference in the course of action (Cooren, 2004; Latour, 2005). This specific stance is associated with one of the strands of research in CCO scholarship, also known as the Montreal School (Brummans et al., 2014; Schoeneborn et al., 2014). This stream of research borrows, from actor-network theory, the idea that the endurance of collective entities can be attributed to the material things that are part of these entities (Cooren, 2004; 2015; Ashcraft, Kuhn, & Cooren, 2009). One of the key issues in this line of inquiry is to reveal not so much why materiality matters, but when and how it does matter. If everything, including non-humans, can participate in constituting the organisation, it becomes important to identify what makes a difference, and how.

Another question that CCO in general has been dealing with is the question of what makes their object of study, the organisation, different from other types of social groups. Sillince, for example, suggests that organisations differ from networks, markets, and communities because they involve rhetoric that 'emphasises context, switches perspectives, creates consistency, and creates purpose' (2010: 134). Bencherki

and Cooren (2011), for their part, show how organisations become actors because members speak and act on behalf of them, thus acting them into existence. Based on a study of the hacker collective Anonymous, Dobusch and Schoeneborn (2015) have proposed the concept of 'organisationality' to extend the reflection on what, precisely, characterises organisations. They suggest that fluid social collectives can be more or less organisational based on three interrelated criteria: interconnected instances of decision-making that are attributed (the first criteria) to a collective entity or actor (the second) which has a collective identity that is accomplished through speech acts (the third). Dobusch and Schoeneborn propose that the concept of organisationality helps to 'switch from the binary classification of social collectives as either organizations or non-organizations to a more gradual differentiation' (2015: 1006). If they suggest that different organisations can present different degrees of organisationality, hinting toward the idea of organisationality as a scale, we wish to further specify their idea by exploring if, and how, the same organisation could, over time, quite radically move up and down the organisationality scale.

In this chapter, we start from the premise that constituting an organisation, a process that is still a theoretical and empirical puzzle for CCO-research (Putnam, McPhee, & Nicotera, 2009), entails a constitution vis-à-vis something else: an outside, an out there. In other words, we accept the classic proposition that organisations exist in an outside environment with which they interact, but we suggest that this distinction (between the organisation and its environment) is constructed through the same communicative processes that constitute the organisation. Indeed, an influential theoretical view within CCO holds that organisations are constituted through four communication processes, or four 'flows': (1) the negotiation of membership, (2) organisational self-structuring, (3) the coordination of activity, and (4) the organisation's institutional positioning (McPhee & Zaug, 2009). Each of these processes or flows implies that constituting the organisation also means deciding, whether consciously or not, on what is in, and what is outside of, the organisation.

Inspired by Dobusch and Schoeneborn's (2015) concept of organisationality, we started our investigation of Breeding Streets by asking ourselves what kind of organisation we were dealing with. As we started to look at how it was produced through communication, we became fascinated by what happened around what could analytically be identified as its boundaries, at different moments in time, noting differences between these various moments. Thinking about the communicative constitution of organisations, and looking at what elements participate in it, necessarily implies determining what elements are excluded from participating in these processes. What we saw then, in the case of our focal organisation, was that what belonged to the organisation and what did not, varied significantly from moment to moment.

We therefore wondered: if the organisation, as seen from the CCO perspective, is continuously constituted, what does that mean for its boundaries? As Kuhn (2017) argues, the CCO's inquiry into the ontologies of organisations has consequences for many aspects of theorising and studying the organisation and, as we argue, organisational boundaries are one of them. Hence, in this chapter, we ask the following main question: how are organisational boundaries constituted through communication?

4.3 Organisational Boundaries

Synthesising the literature on organisational boundaries, Santos and Eisenhardt (2005) identified four conceptions of such boundaries. They argue that organisational boundaries emerge as a result of mechanisms of (1) efficiency, (2) power, (3) competence, and (4) identity. Broadening and deepening what they see as a limited research agenda (Santos & Eisenhardt, 2005: 491), they show how different boundary types are more or less relevant in different markets and in, and between, different types of organisations, urging for more research on, and theorisation of, the relationships between the different boundary conceptions. They explain how the efficiency-inspired view of boundaries is grounded in a legal understanding of the organisation and the assumption that organisations strive for cost minimisation, while the power-inspired view is rooted in industrial organisation economics and the idea that organisations strive for autonomy (Santos & Eisenhardt, 2005: 494). The third conception, which relies on competence, emerges from structural contingency theory and sees growth as the main reason organisations exist, while the fourth conception sees boundaries in terms of identity, relying on a framework of organisational identity and managerial cognition (ibid).

Heracleous (2004) has argued that most views of organisational boundaries still emerge from a managerial perspective (e.g. Fiol, 1989), informed by (post) transaction cost economics thinking or a property rights framework, as well as by general systems theory. The latter sees organisations as entities in an external environment (Oliver, 1993), or ecology, to which they have to adapt. Santos and Eisenhardt indeed speak of the 'key tools for boundary management' (2005: 494), which exemplifies the view that the organisation manages its boundaries. This view is not exclusively reserved for research on transaction cost economics. For instance, even if it is maintained that organisational boundaries serve as points of reference, or mental maps (Schreyög & Sydow, 2010), their value is seen in terms of facilitating efficient navigation of the organisation. Even Santos and Eisenhardt's boundary-conception of identity, which takes sense-making as its central concept (2005: 500), is rooted in the assumption that identification with the organisation can, and should, be governed

in order for the organisation to reach a certain goal – in this case, coherence. Hence, identification becomes an effect of boundary-drawing.

However, stimulated by the pioneering work around the notion of the boundary object (Star & Griesemer, 1989; Trompette & Vinck, 2009), studies on liminality and on boundary work have shown that several processes are taking place at the boundaries of organisations, or organisational units, without this being planned or strategised (Sturdy et al., 2009; Ellis & Ybema, 2010; Shortt, 2015; Helfen 2015). Building on Santos and Eisenhardt, we ask how these different conceptions of boundaries are constituted, thus bringing a performative angle to the issue of boundary management. In so doing, we turn Santos and Eisenhardt's definition of 'the organizational boundary […] as the demarcation between the organization and its environment' (2005: 491) inside-out, and argue that organisations not only manage their boundaries, but also exist as a result of these boundaries. As such, and in line with the CCO approach, we challenge reified views of the organisation and assert that focusing on 'the organisation' can actually stand in the way of studying organising (Czarniawska, 2013). Looking at organisations as entities implies that they begin and end somewhere: hence, boundaries act as the elements that separate and distinguish an organisation from other entities. But as Santos and Eisenhardt have also noted (2005: 491), such views do not necessarily spend a lot of time considering boundaries, quickly moving to an 'inside' that appears to be as obvious as the organisation itself.

In contrast, researchers using a practice-based approach have in fact studied the construction of organisational boundaries by organisational members beyond managers (e.g., Mørk et al., 2012). Czarniawska (2004), for instance, puts forward the idea of action nets, a concept helping to understand how interconnected actions by human and non-human actors relate the social to the institutional, or the local to the global. The concept of action nets turns the idea of boundaries inside out: instead of delineating containers for action to take place in, boundaries are seen as results of action. We too adopt the view that boundaries are constituted through recurrent actions that can take the form of practices and are a result of (inter)action, rather than a fixed quality of the organisation. As the CCO perspective has shown, 'the organisation' has to be produced and reproduced. Boundaries have rarely been the central focus of inquiry in CCO (the aforementioned study by Dobusch and Schoeneborn (2015) being a notable exception). This is not surprising given that the concept of a boundary comes with strongly fixed and formalised connotations, which sit uneasily within a processual and practice-based ontology. But if organisations are nothing but temporary solidifications of ongoing processes, then so are their boundaries. Therefore, understanding this property of boundaries becomes the key issue.

As such, our aim is to explore what a processual understanding of boundaries can allow us to understand about the existence of organisations. In doing so, we aim to challenge the idea that boundaries are marked in space, and that unclear boundaries are problematic. Our analysis of the final months of an organisation's official existence will show how organisational members performed the boundaries of the organisation through language, and how, because of the nature of language, this resulted in different boundaries in different instances. Counter to the intuition that unclear boundaries cause confusion, we will show how this organisation managed to function and go on in spite of difficulties precisely because of its elastic boundaries.

4.4 Methods

Carried out by the first author, the work consisted of intense qualitative fieldwork from August 2015 until January 2016, when Breeding Streets produced an event with funding from the Art of Impact. The chosen approach was similar to Bruno Latour's general approach to fieldwork (Sergi & Vásquez, forthcoming) and Czarniawska's mobile ethnography (2004), in the sense that we followed the action and went where it happened (see Munro & Jordan, 2013, for a similar approach). This meant that the first author dropped by at different venues, at various moments, and met with different actors each time. About two days a week on average were spent in the field, and this time was divided between non-participant observation, 'observant participation' (Moeran, 2009) and interviews. She got actively involved with various activities as a volunteer, and used a snowball sampling method (Lindlof & Taylor, 2011) to identify new interviewees or events to join. She also collected four years of photographic documentation of events, social media posts, internal correspondence, funding applications, annual reports and budgets, and strategic plans. Access was ensured mainly by fulfilling the role of a blogger for The Art of Impact's website (a requirement that accompanied the funds received). Finally, twenty interviews were conducted, recorded, and transcribed. The material was open coded in NVivo.

Given that we understand all organisational phenomena as being made present in communication (Taylor & Van Every, 2000; 2011), during the coding, we paid particular attention to moments where the boundaries of Breeding Streets were made present in communication, whether during interactions or in documents. For several rounds, we moved between zooming in on certain moments or documents within our material, and zooming out to see how these moments helped better understand the focal organisation (Nicolini, 2012). Finally, we produced three vignettes, each illustrative of a different way of drawing the organisational boundaries of Breeding Streets.

The vignettes are drawn from a variety of sources (e.g. observation, interviews, correspondence) and focus on interactions at the micro-level, as is common in ethnographic, CCO-inspired studies (e.g. Cooren, Brummans, & Charrieras, 2008; Vásquez & Cooren, 2013; Brummans, 2016; Vásquez, Schoeneborn, & Sergi, 2016). In our iterative style of analysing data and comparing it with literature, in search of what Alvesson and Kärreman (2011) call 'break-downs', we ended up writing the vignettes focused on the thing that continued to puzzle us – the elasticity of the organisation's boundaries – and inevitably left aside other aspects of the organisation (Sturdy, Handley, Clark, & Fincham, 2009: 66). In the vignettes, we identified various modes of boundary-drawing (see also Table 3) which we identified as constituting internal boundaries, constituting external boundaries, challenging internal boundaries, and challenging external boundaries. Furthermore, we focused the vignettes on the effects of modes of boundary-drawing that were most relevant to our inquiry (Kvale, 2006), while presenting other examples in Table 3 in order to demonstrate the richness of the material.

4.5. Empirical Setting

Breeding Streets' name is derived from the so-called 'breeding place policy', a programme set up by Amsterdam's city council in support of inexpensive working spaces for artists (Peck, 2012). Laura, the founder of Breeding Streets, was surprised to find that not many artists in such 'breeding places' were engaging with the surrounding neighbourhood in which their workspaces were located. In 2009, she set up Breeding Streets, with the aim to give artists and cultural entrepreneurs a workspace for (almost) free while improving the neighbourhood at the same time. Artists affiliated with Breeding Streets had to give some of their time and creativity to the neighbourhood by setting up activities and cultural programmes, or showcasing their work locally on a regular basis. The activities and cultural programmes were often led by individual artists or artist duos, and presented as temporary art projects in their own right, yet at the same time the activities would always refer to Breeding Streets as their facilitator and organisational 'home' – for instance by including the logo, mentioning the purpose of Breeding Streets, or referring to the other 'streets'. Thus, there was a detectable effort to attribute a goal towards Breeding Streets as an entity, making it ultimately an organisation rather than a network or community (Sillince, 2010). Nevertheless, as we will show, this effort had to co-exist with efforts to present the activities as holding an individual artist's signature, or being the work of an otherwise more recognisably 'artistic' organisational form, such as a performance collective or a band.

The funding for Breeding Streets came from the housing corporations owning a large part of the property in the neighbourhoods where the organisation was active. Funding was granted on a one-year basis and supplemented by funding from the city council, with occasional support from art funding schemes. At the height of its activity, Breeding Streets was comprised of five locations: the Market, Fashion, Music, Theatre, and Colour Streets. These were not so much streets, but rather venues differing in size, shape, the type of programme they developed, and the volume and frequency of their activities. These five locations were run by around one to three artists who were paid on a freelance basis by the foundation, often for one or two days a week (see Table 3).

In 2014, the housing corporations announced they would no longer support Breeding Streets. The market had improved in the northern neighbourhoods of Amsterdam and the property they had lent to the organisation could bring in more revenue. It was clear that without the support of these housing corporations, Breeding Streets could not survive: each street needed these spaces, which they all rented at a price between something well below market average and something equalling the cost of utilities, to carry on their artistic activities and projects. Faced with this important change, the founder and then-manager came, after a long negotiation process, to the conclusion that they could not continue on, and that the organisation had no other choice than to cease to exist by the end of 2015. She hired an interim manager to help the separate 'streets' of the organisation transform into independent organisations, a moment that entailed an irreversible 'fracturing' of the organisation.

However, in 2015, Breeding Streets was approached by a new art funding scheme looking for exemplary projects to fund. The funding programme, called The Art of Impact, was initiated by the Dutch Ministry for Education, Culture, and Science and aimed to support art projects 'with a clear and explicit impact on society.' Being chosen as an example of this type of art, Breeding Streets was asked to formally apply for funding, with the promise of being awarded the funding if they met the formal requirements. The interim manager, Heather, wrote an application for the production of an artistic event, to be made and executed with the artists from all 'streets', with the aim of showcasing the variety of artistic endeavours by Breeding Streets' artists. Given that the artists were all aware that Breeding Streets would disappear by the end of the year, some of them had already been searching for ways to make their activities persist. Obtaining this funding from the new Art of Impact programme triggered the idea of leaving traces of what they had done over the course of the previous years, and finding new forms to continue what they were doing.

Venue	Market Street (later: Mama Louise)	Music Street	Colour Street (later: ILandArt)	Fashion Street	Theatre Street
Founded	2009, independent in 2014	2010, independent in 2016	2010, independent in 2016	2011, independent in 2015	2012, independent in 2016
Coordinator at Time of Fieldwork	Jeditah, Maaike	Lena, Rosa	Frouwkje, Tessa	Mira (from 2011), Gwen (from 2013), Inge (from 2015)	Peter
Activities at Time of Fieldwork (July 2015 – January 2016)	Pop-up shop	Weekly music classes, occasional parade or festival.	Arts and crafts workshop for children. Supporting affiliated artists' projects.	Swap Boutique, World Restaurant, yoga and dance, hair dressers, beauty workshops for elderly women. Supporting affiliated artists' projects.	Knitting group for design projects, occasional performances with a small-scale audience. All theatre makers make their own performances with their own funding, helped by Theatre Street/ Breeding Streets.
Location/ Type of Venue	Shops in Van der Pek area (most 'gentrified' area of the borough).	Small office and studio in houses in Vogelbuurt (considered a poor area).	A former car garage space underneath an apartment block in Banne area.	First at Waterlandplein, from 2013 in former Chinese restaurant in large shopping centre called Over 't IJ.	Former shop in Tuindorp Oostzaan, an area almost exclusively inhabited by (former) shipping wharf workers, considered a hermetic community.
People Involved at Time of Fieldwork (July 2015 – January 2016)	Two cultural entrepreneurs help alternating starting entrepreneurs set up their businesses.	Professional musicians live in this neighbourhood and teach music to local residents, or coach an amateur choir.	Two artists run workshops with help from a locally based social worker.	13 artists/ designers rent a studio, 2 'flex workers' use the cafe as their office, 3 hair dressers, 4 dance/yoga teachers offer their services, several groups organise monthly events.	15 theatre makers (performers, writers, directors) pay a contribution to use the space to work and perform. However, on a daily basis, the space is often empty.

Table 3: Venues, Activities, and Actors Connected to Breeding Streets.

Generally speaking, whereas Czarniawska sees organisational boundaries as drawn once the organisation is legally constituted 'around a portion of action nets' (2004: 780), our case shows that boundaries were constituted over and over again, and in different ways. The next section presents three vignettes, written from the viewpoint of the researcher who conducted the fieldwork. The vignettes are offered as detailed illustrations of what happened around the boundaries of Breeding Streets, and were chosen because Breeding Streets' boundaries were especially at stake in these particular moments. While the first vignette will show how the supposed consistency and substance of the organisation is largely situated in specific online texts, the second vignette shows a picture of a more fragmented or modular organisation. It demonstrates how parts which are sometimes considered to belong to the organisation are excluded for the sake of efficiently producing an event. Finally, the third vignette will illustrate how, in the event itself, the boundaries of the organisation are drawn much wider, as well as less clearly, so as to allow for multiple organisational entities to co-exist.

4.6 Results: Modes of Boundary Drawing

I. Textualising the Organisation

On a Friday afternoon in the summer, Amsterdam is buzzing with activity. The city is crowded with tourists, and locals race by on their bicycles, anxious to get their weekend started. On a terrace across from the city's main railway station, in the midst of all this dynamism, I meet with Heather, manager of Breeding Streets. It had been difficult to reach someone from this organisation. I had known of the initiative's existence for a few years, seeing some of its activities on social media or hearing about its events from others. But since the organisation is active in a part of town I rarely go to, I never really got to see it.

When I learned that Breeding Streets had been given financial support from a new and prestigious funding scheme for the arts, I got more intrigued. An acquaintance, who had been involved with the organisation some years back, gave me the contact details of Heather. Several e-mails were left unanswered, and the website bore no sign of a phone number. The only address mentioned was a postal address, giving no indication of even the slightest office activity. When I inquired who else could speak on behalf of Breeding Streets, I got a second contact with the explanation that this was a contractor who only worked for the organisation occasionally.

A few weeks later Heather responded, and a meeting was arranged. 'The separate Breeding Streets are in the process of becoming independent,' explained Heather. 'From the start, in 2009, we had some art funding, some funding from the local council, and some funding from a housing corporation. All of that stopped. That's why all the separate streets must become independent. That is actually my job, to help them become their own organisation.' She also explained what a strange position Breeding Streets was in. The newly founded national funding scheme The Art of Impact had decided they were worthy of their financial support, right when the organisation was accepting that it was nearing its end. As Heather explained,

> *The Fund for Cultural Participation had given us funding before. They eventually nominated us for The Art of Impact. No one has done what we are trying to do, which is making independent organisations out of Breeding Streets, so we are setting an example. It is strange, because we got the support from The Art of Impact first, and now we have to come up with the content. I even said to [the director of The Art of Impact]: "it's a very strange gift you are giving me. First, you offer money, and then you want me to do all these things in return!" Because I now have to write an entire plan to show what we'll do with the money, in which I also have to show the impact for everyone involved in this project.*

Heather was interested in the idea of having an organisational researcher following this change from one organisation into separate entities, and sent me several documents following our meeting. The strategic plan for 2013-2014 read:

> *Every Breeding Street has a coordinator. These coordinators are selected because of their social skills, organisational talent, and eye for quality. They work together in an overarching non-profit organisation with a general manager and an artistic manager. The non-profit organisation guides the coordinators with their financial, managerial, and administrative tasks. The overarching organisation holds a lot of knowledge and know-how concerning property management and communication as well. This non-profit organisation is supervised by an independent board which meets regularly. Breeding Streets came out of the Noorderparkkamer*[13] *and has a professional management. It is a non-profit organisation.*

This plan was written in the period prior to receiving the news that the structural financial support would disappear. The challenge Heather was facing now, she explained, was to guide the coordinators of the different streets in setting up their own organisations out of Breeding Streets, for instance by setting up their own non-profits. This entailed finding new streams of revenue, applying for other sources of

[13] A cultural venue built in the middle of a park, which was founded by the same founder of the Breeding Streets.

funding, and taking care of all managerial and administrative tasks that were previously done by the Breeding Streets. Heather's idea was to use part of the funding from The Art of Impact to train and develop these capacities in the coordinators. The plan she wrote for the funding scheme, and which she supplied later, read:

> *We want to be able to react to local impulses immediately. To be, and to remain, a catalyser for creative professionality, which actively connects itself to the amateur circuit. Not from a large and hierarchical governance structure, but from the heart of the Streets themselves, led by the coordinator. [...] The organisational structure [must] change from top-down to bottom-up by placing the coordinators in the centre of the organisation, so they can engage and coach amateur artists and talented local residents more actively and directly within the projects and the programming of the Breeding Streets.*

The references to 'a large and hierarchical governance structure' that was 'top-down' left me somewhat puzzled, given that the organisation had neither people on the payroll, nor an office, nor any clear representative besides the manager. Here we see how an organisation is talked into being by Heather, as well as written up as much more formal in the official documents she provides. We also see that these documents are characterised by different styles. Whereas the first document refers to 'the organisation', the second speaks on behalf of a 'we'. Heather also gives voice to the organisation by speaking of its strategic goals: what has to happen in order to make the separate streets independent. At the same time, she speaks of a 'we' and even, interestingly, an 'I' – in the context of the funding Breeding Streets would receive from the new art scheme The Art of Impact. Within the same story, the boundaries around the organisation move from a classic managerial structure that manages the coordinators, to a collective of coordinators without a clear hierarchy, to one person: the manager. Breeding Streets is also given a much more structured form on paper, with boundaries that seem clearly drawn, than what I encountered.

II. Fracturing the Organisation

The deserted square at the border of the mall looks as tired as Heather feels. The chips shop, a run-down bowling centre, and a sketchy-looking bar announcing 'tropical cocktails', form a stark contrast to her polished, professional look. She does not live here, in this neglected corner of the northern part of Amsterdam, a 30-minute bike ride north of the harbour (and of civilisation as many residents of Amsterdam see it), but she knows the area very well. She greets everyone cheerfully, despite her obvious fatigue, and once all the artists have found her says: 'I've ordered take-out for everyone, but before we start, I really need a smoke.' It is Friday afternoon, 5:30 pm, and the end of her first week at a new job and a training day on the other side of the

country. She made it back to Amsterdam on time, but exhausted. She is here to tie up loose ends.

One of these loose ends concerns an organisation called Breeding Streets, of which a part resides on this square. A former Chinese restaurant was turned into the Fashion Street two years ago, and functions as what is best described as a fashionable community centre. It is also the largest venue of the dispersed and temporary artistic organisation that is The Breeding Streets. Heather has been acting as a temporary manager, with the task to help the individual actors move on with their activities in a different way when the organisation stops to exist, a few months from now.

Once inside, everyone has sat down on stools around one of the high wooden tables and Peter, who is in charge of the Theatre Street, brings plastic plates for the Surinamese take-out. In the area behind the tables large wooden cubes on wheels, made of the same wood, are spaced out until the back of the space. Their doors are closed now, but inside the cubes are art studios that are rented out to independent designers and artists. During the day their front doors fold open and artists expose handmade jewellery collections, dresses, postcards, and plants. The other half of the space is used as a cafe where the cups and furniture are for sale too, but also features the Swap Boutique, a dance studio, and a hairdresser. Its busyness seamlessly fits the setting of a shop, but the place has an undeniable out-of-the-ordinariness.

Figure 6: In front of the Fashion Street (photo by Marlise Steenman).

Now, everything is quiet, and no one looks as if they want to spend their Friday evening here. We are here to talk business. The artists who manage the Music Street, the Theatre Street, and the Fashion Street are present. The visual artist who runs the Colour Street is abroad for an art project, but being here with almost everyone is already quite an achievement as people's calendars are full of different creative projects in, and outside of, The Breeding Streets, as well as work that brings in money. 'I'll start talking while you eat and once I am done you guys can take over,' Heather says matter-of-factly. Food is being passed around while Heather starts off, taking notes on her MacBook while she speaks.

The topic of the meeting is the organisation of a public event that is meant to showcase what Heather refers to as 'the highlights' of the art projects in The Breeding Streets. The organisation will soon lose its main source of financial support: the vacant property provided by several housing corporations. They are being given the opportunity for an incidental amount of funding by a new funding scheme for the arts called The Art of Impact. It soon becomes clear that everyone wants to be strategic about how they use it. 'We don't want too much work,' Heather starts off. 'The World Restaurant is a format we all know. The dishes and the names of the chefs are already written on the placemats, so if we extend that we basically have the programme leaflet for the evening.' The dinner will be scheduled during a small scale cultural festival that takes place every December and showcases upcoming art in the northern boroughs. Interestingly, Heather and Peter act as curators for this festival. Therefore, it is difficult to see where their management role for The Breeding Streets ends and their curating for the festival begins. The other artists are aware of their double position, but given the tight entanglement of various artistic and cultural initiatives in this part of the city, no one seems to mind.

The discussion moves on and everyone agrees that organising a dinner is an efficient way to bring together diverging artistic projects without having to come up with an overarching theme or narrative, and Heather now moves into the possibility of the different projects having a place there. Lena, a musician and community artist in charge of the Music Street, makes a suggestion: 'We can project images from the Music Parade, you know where at some point everyone's face paint was ruined because of the rain, but with a fantastic atmosphere. And then we can ask a few people to put on those costumes and do a mini parade at the end of the dinner.' Heather responds: 'Really? Can we do that? Because you know me, I'll put that into the programme immediately!'

After the conversation has turned to other elements to incorporate, the overall format comes into discussion again. Even though a dinner with several courses will

naturally create intermezzos for performances, there was a need for someone, preferably a performer, to act as a master of ceremonies. Heather called on Peter to explain a theatrical event he initiated, and he starts off. 'Well, yes, without wanting to stick my format onto it, you know. It's basically variétés, so all sorts of things together without there having to be a common thread...' Heather cuts in: 'Can you be more concrete?' Peter: 'Yes, well, we have a bingo, we do poetry, we use repetition...' In this instance, Peter carefully balances his two roles. He is aware that, as one of the representatives of the different Breeding Streets venues, he is part of a collaborative process needed to produce this event, whereas, as the curator of the festival where the event will be part of, he has certain preferences for the content.

Now the discussion moves on to the practical issue of scheduling the event. This topic brings a painful aspect to the surface: the fact that two of the Breeding Streets venues, the Fashion Street and the Colour Street, each wanted to host their 'own' artistic dinner during the Winter Inside Festival. Gwen, the manager of the Fashion Street, which is where the World Restaurant originated (see picture 1 for an impression of an earlier edition), raises the issue: 'It's tricky because I had a chat with the Colour Street, and they want to do their second dinner during the festival. But I think that this is a Breeding Streets project, so we have to do it together. But I get that they want to do something in the Rietwijker Theatre.' Heather responds: 'OK, let me offer you a peek backstage of the Winter Inside Festival. It is very likely that the Rietwijker Theatre will not be one of the locations. So, the situation you describe will not happen.' But Gwen insists: 'Things have become very complex because everyone has started to work as if they're an island. That became very frustrating.' Peter: 'But the idea was "why have separate dinner events if you can combine them?" Separate would always mean a struggle to get enough participants.' Heather: 'And you know what? You guys should make the World Restaurant into a registered brand. I can help you with that. It's not very common in the arts, but it is absolutely possible.' Gwen interrupts: 'Yes, that would be great!' Heather then continues: 'But know that you want to do what you say you want to do, because it is really about you guys!' Peter adds: 'Yes, I came up with this idea because of your existing format for the World Restaurant.' Heather: 'You are the Breeding Streets, and this has to be a platform for you!' Gwen then responds: 'No, of course! I am very happy with this.'

A heated discussion suddenly sizzles out when Gwen announces she has to be somewhere else. She rushes to say her goodbyes and Heather announces she will send everyone a summary with the tasks and deadlines. After she leaves, the group discussion quickly turns to less pressing matters while people finish their food.

Figure 7: Artist and initiator of the World Restaurant, heading the cooking team during an earlier edition of the World Restaurant in the Fashion Street (photo by Marlise Steenman).

In this meeting, it often seems ambiguous what constitutes an internal or an external boundary. For instance, the Winter Inside Festival is a separate entity, legally and discursively, but shares a lot of administrative and managerial elements, as well as actual people, with the organisation Breeding Streets. Likewise, the boundaries between the different 'streets' appear internal, but when we consider that each street is applying for its own funding as well as receiving some funding from the Breeding Streets, and that some were intending to become a legal entity after the discontinuation of Breeding Streets, the image of separate – and in fact competing – mini-organisations seems more representative.

Furthermore, Gwen, Heather, and Peter drew different boundaries around, and within, the Breeding Streets organisation. Gwen advocated the view that the creation of internal boundaries ('everyone has started to work as if they're an island') has resulted in unwanted and unjustified competition among the different venues. Heather, by contrast, enacts the vision of the external boundary – so the boundary between the collective and the outside world is what counts most ('you are the Breeding Streets, this has to be a platform for you!'). Peter seems to espouse this view by suggesting that merging similar initiatives, within the confines of the organisational entity that is the Breeding Streets, is in the interest of everyone. Sharing artistic content within the boundaries of the Breeding Streets, in order to reach a larger audience, trumps individual (or shared) artistic authorship. However, even if Heather seems to agree with Peter, the organisational actors are still required to draw a boundary around their own work if they do not want to have it copied by another organisational actor ('you guys should make the World Restaurant into a registered brand'). So, whereas Heather finds the shared organisational boundary around the

Breeding Streets more important than the boundaries between the separate venues – where each apply for their own funding and have their own projects – she does not deny the existence of the latter.

Furthermore, when Heather states 'you know me, I'll put that into the programme immediately!' she positions herself as having the authority over this project. She further reinforces her authority when she makes clear that the 'last hurrah' of Breeding Streets – this event they are planning – cannot happen without her crucial double role of interim manager and festival director. When she offers 'a peak behind the scenes', she first constitutes the boundary between the two organisations (Breeding Streets and the festival) before offering a peak across that boundary. With this move, she affirms the existence of Breeding Streets, while at the same time denying its autonomy. Here, it seems, its 'organisational character' helps cover up the fact that the actors supposedly in charge ('You are the Breeding Streets!') have nothing to say.

III. Extending the Organisation

It is December 19th, 2015, the day of the artistic event the people from the Breeding Streets have been preparing for for several months. The setting is the Fashion Street, but the contrast with the meeting in the previous vignette could not be starker. Entering the venue on this afternoon, you see a buzzing mass of people. In the left corner of what used to be the Chinese restaurant, an artist and former manager of the Colour Street is teaching how to make Japanese bags. Around 5 pm, they wrap up their activities because the space has to be prepared for the artistic event of the evening, the Diner Variété du Nord. Elisabeth, a student who has been hired by Heather to help out with producing the event, walks into the space, clipboard and bags full of decorations in hand.

I help to set up chairs, folding tables, and setting the tables. It is quite a puzzle, as the space has an odd shape and the left part of the space is partly occupied by screens and cupboards displaying the activities of the Breeding Streets. Not having enough chairs, some tables get benches. They match the tables, and the number of seats that get created has to be continuously monitored in order to make sure all signed up guests can be accommodated, as well as some unexpected ones. Unsure of what to put where, I ask Elisabeth, who says that Lena, in charge of the Fashion Street, knows best. Tablecloths, with eastern-looking appliqués, are skilfully placed on the tables and boxes with china appear. It is clear that the artists working in the Fashion Street have a certain routine. Given that the Diner Variété du Nord uses the template of the World Restaurant, which is developed and regularly held at the Fashion Street, this night feels like a more elaborate version of what they already know.

In the back of this side of the space, Marlise, a photographer, is manning a Christmas-themed photo booth. Recognising her from the World Restaurant, I chat with her about her job this evening and she mentions that she will be taking pictures throughout the night. People start to come in through the main entrance, queue to have their tickets checked, and the whole space goes into 'show time' mode (see picture 2). The volunteers behind the bar stand up straight, ready to serve drinks in glasses labelled with people's names, so as to avoid running out of glasses. The chefs, mostly migrant women living in the area, are busy applying the finishing touches. Colourful headscarves bounce up and down as they pace through the crowded kitchen in the back of the space, large dishes in their hands.

Jeff, the master of ceremonies, is an actor who initiated several art initiatives in the same part of the city. He was asked because of his showmanship and knowledge of this kind of hard-to-pin-down community art, and now prepares himself to take the microphone and address the almost seated guests. He kicks off the evening by telling a story about how he was invited to get to know the Breeding Streets in order to bid them a beautiful farewell on this evening. 'What I saw was applied intelligence, courage, and persistence.' Standing in the middle of the space, reading from a piece of paper, the words do not seem to resonate much with the audience. He then introduces the artists who manage the different venues of the Breeding Streets. When he calls out 'Gwen!' Gwen shouts out 'Mira and Inge!' her co-managers of the Fashion Street. When he mentions that Katja coordinated the Colour Street before Frouwkje did, Katja seems confused as to whether she is expected to give a speech. The guests, who are not familiar with all these people and who are here because of their interest in the cultural festival Winter Inside, look slightly puzzled.

When the food comes, things become more engaging. The chefs walk out of the kitchen, encouraged by an enthusiastic applause from the guests, and stand next to Jeff, shy and proud in equal measure. A woman who cooked chicken tandoori mentions she also has a catering business, and repeats its name into the microphone. The artist duo that usually run the World Restaurant now serve a cocktail with locally grown herbs, and mention that they plan to develop their drink further in the future.

In between the courses, short performances based on the life stories of local residents take place. Jeff announces each artist by their own name, as well as their affiliation with either the Theatre Street, the Music Street, or the Colour Street. An amateur choir, led by a musician from the Music Street, sings a couple of songs. They are not always in tune and the sound amplification is less than ideal, but it is clear they are having fun. Their final song is an homage to Amsterdam's northern borough and a

staple for culture lovers living north of the city's harbour. As the choir sings, many people in the audience chime in.

Then, an actress affiliated with the Colour Street performs a monologue based on conversations with Muslim women living in the tall apartment block opposite to her house. The women were meant to be here tonight, she admits. 'I would have wanted to propose a toast to Amsterdam North. I would have wanted to toast with the women. It is a shame they are not here, because they could have told their own story.'

As coffee is served, Peter launches his Poetry Bingo. The concept is as simple as it is effective. At the very beginning of the event, each guest was handed a page that Peter tore out of a collection of poetry on the spot. Having a second copy on hand, he randomly picks pages from it and asks people to read them out loud. The guest who recognises the page in their hand, shouts out bingo and is given a prize. Jeff introduces him as an artist affiliated with the Theatre Street, and Peter adds that he is also the curator of the Winter Inside Festival.

The evening wraps up and as I find Heather and Jeff smoking a cigarette outside, they share their observations of the evening with me. 'It's North, you know', says Jeff. 'You cannot expect people to pay attention all the time. Just because someone is holding a microphone does not mean they will quiet down, and that's actually very refreshing,' muses Jeff. 'But that last song, the North Ballade,' says Heather, 'everyone who comes to these kinds of things in North knows it. And it brings everyone together.'

Figure 8: Participants of the Colour Street acting as waiting staff during the Diner Variété du Nord (photo by Marlise Steenman).

In this story, we see that the network-like character – in which the organisation extends from including all venues, volunteers, and partner organisations, to only the director and the managers of the different streets – can be conducive to the emergence of other organisational entities. Whereas we would think that a dense and clearly delineated organisation (for instance, a situation in which only paid individuals would qualify as belonging to the organisation) would allow for a quicker trigger of other organisational entities, the opposite seems to be the case. During the staging of the Diner Variété du Nord event, everyone is attached to the label Breeding Streets: the one-time volunteers behind the bar, the regular volunteers in the kitchen, all artists from all different 'streets', regardless of whether they have anything at all to do with another street, and the amateur musicians and crafts people showcasing their skills. This inclusiveness seems to encourage people to promote their own organisational entity, whether a catering business, a hair salon, or an artistic project. Because the different organisational units (i.e. the different 'streets') are unified, a platform emerges from which new organisational units (the projects of individual artists, but also the catering businesses from the cooks) can be presented. This seems counterintuitive, because knowledge from branding or marketing tells us to have one clear message.

4.7 Analysis and Discussion

In the vignettes presented above, we see how the organisation is reconfigured at different moments in time. In this section, we will turn our attention to the analysis of what this meant for the organisation and its boundaries. We suggest that when we say that organisations are constituted in communication, it means that their boundaries are often invoked and called into question. Thus, we focus on the effects stemming from the organising happening around what appears to be Breeding Streets' boundaries, as perceived and established by actors, in each vignette.

Indeed, if all three vignettes showcase instances of organising that resulted in, among other things, drawing the boundaries of what Breeding Streets is (or was supposed to be, at that moment), each of the stories showcases organising processes that unfolded differently, with various effects. 'Textualising the Organisation' shows a situation in which the managerial and strategic side of the organisation is manifested, resulting, at first sight, in a neatly drawn picture of a central management instructing the coordinators. There is no mention of (partly) paid artists, of volunteers, or of active participants – while it becomes clear in the second vignette that these are of vital importance for the organisation's activities. What also becomes clear in the second vignette is that the streets do not form a very cohesive unit (hence 'Fracturing the

Organisation'), and that there is a lingering conflict over the ownership of an artistic project. Finally, in the third vignette entitled 'Extending the Organisation', we see how the boundaries of the organisation are stretched to the extent that they incorporate different mini-organisations (the streets that have already become independent) and entrepreneurial initiatives (the cook's catering business), and exist concurrently with artistic personas (the coordinators of the different streets). In these three vignettes, Breeding Streets is painted as what could be seen as different organisations.

Events are key moments for Breeding Streets. Widely advertised events such as the Diner Variété du Nord help bring in many different types of people, but even the more modest activities, such as the weekly crafts workshop of the Colour Street, or the incidental street parades of the Music Street, are ways in which the organisation is rendered present. The interesting fact is that these moments became a stepping stone, or a jumping board, for other organisations. To some extent this was even the main raison d'être for the organisation, because the temporariness was always a given. It was expected that each street would continue as its own organisation in the formal sense, i.e. being its own legal entity, keeping its own financial administration, etc. Indeed, most of them did (the Market Street being the exception). In this sense, conceiving boundaries in an elastic way can yield positive effects for the organisation: it allows it to reinvent itself whenever necessary.

However, not all effects of elasticity are beneficial for the organisation. A consequence of the high potential of stretching boundaries, in the case of Breeding Streets, is that no one seems to fully speak on behalf of the organisation. Indeed, if everything and everyone can belong, what is 'the organisation'? The coordinators refuse to take credit for their efforts when the host suggests it, or act in a double (or triple) organisational attachment, as is the case for Peter who manages the Theatre Street, acts as a curator for the Winter Inside Festival, and is also an artist. Interestingly, the master of ceremonies, a performer with a great affinity for the Breeding Streets, but who is nevertheless a relative outsider, is the only one loudly advocating for the Breeding Streets, thereby claiming the existence of the organisation, whereas those people involved express more ambiguity about the status of the Breeding Streets.

Taken together, the three vignettes illustrate different modes of drawing boundaries (also exemplified in Table 4). The way that the organisation is constituted in text, is not the same as it is constituted through events, materials, spaces, and recurring interaction between residents in the same neighbourhood. Formalising the organisation in texts has been argued to ignore a large part of the way an organisation is embedded in local and embodied practices, while a focus on only these practices risks ignoring the effect of strategies, business plans, policies, and other texts on such

practices (Smith, 2001). We provide an overview of these different modes, with a few illustrative examples, in Table 4. This table does not present an exhaustive list of these modes, and further studies could extend this list.

Drawing boundaries	Examples
Constituting Internal Boundaries	- Heather is helping the different streets become independent, thereby emphasising that they are already separate entities within the (now still existing) organisation Breeding Streets (V1). - Peter is hesitant to propose the variété format he has used in his own theatrical programme for the Theatre Street, and 'stick it onto' the entire organisation, thus showing he is aware of the different aims and scopes of the separate streets (V2).
Constituting External Boundaries	- Peter argues that no people should be asked to re-enact a parade the Music Street had organised before, because all participants should have been involved in the Breeding Street activities (V2). - Jeff kicks off the evening by telling a story about how he was invited to get to know the Breeding Streets in order to bid them a beautiful farewell on this evening. 'What I saw was applied intelligence, courage, and persistence' (V3).
Challenging Internal Boundaries	- Heather suggests using the format of the World Restaurant as the template for the Diner Variété du Nord event, ignoring the conflicts that happened when the Colour Street got funding to stage this format that was developed by the Fashion Street. An artistic product that has repeatedly been said to belong to the Fashion Street, or to an artistic duo residing there, is now able to be claimed by all actors attached to the Breeding Streets (V2). - Scheduling the event brings to the surface the fact that the Fashion Street and the Colour Street initially each wanted to host their 'own' artistic dinner during the Winter Inside Festival. The Fashion Street manager says: 'I think that this is a Breeding Streets project, so we have to do it together'. An artistic product that has repeatedly been said to belong to the Fashion Street, or to an artistic duo residing there, was staged at the Colour Street by the same artistic duo. The Colour Street subsequently received funding to organise it again, while the Fashion Street did not. Blurring the boundaries between the different 'streets' helps Fashion Street reclaim what they feel belongs to them. (V2).
Challenging External Boundaries	- When the Breeding Streets know their organisation will end, they aim to use the funding from The Art of Impact to react immediately to local impulses and connect the venues more to the amateur art circuit (V1). - In between the courses, short monologues are performed by artists, based on the life stories of the people they encountered in this part of the city. Each artist is announced by their own name as well as their affiliation with either the Theatre Street or the Colour Street (V3).

Table 4: Modes of Boundary Drawing, with Selected Examples from the Vignettes (V1, V2, V3).

Whereas Dobusch and Schoeneborn talk of organisationality as a scale for all organisations, we suggest that organisations can move out of this spectrum in the course of their daily activities and decisions, being more or less 'an organisation' at different times. Breeding Streets offers an extreme example of such elasticity. Yet, we would argue that because this elasticity derives from the communicative constitution of

organisations and, more fundamentally, from the properties of language, all organisations possess it. A future line of inquiry could open up the question of why certain organisations, instead of making use of such elasticity, devote all of their efforts to reproducing the (relatively) same organisation, sometimes even to the point of endangering the persistence of their collective.

4.8 Concluding Remarks

If our initial premise that organisational boundaries are communicatively constituted has some merit, we would like to suggest that these boundaries may possess certain characteristics of communication. Seen from a communication-centred perspective, organisational boundaries can stretch at times, and shrink at others, depending on how they are communicatively constituted. Thus, in these different instances, the boundaries modify what 'the organisation' covers. Moreover, as we have shown with our empirical material, these opposite effects can even be produced in the same communicational event (e.g. during a meeting). This is precisely what we witnessed with Breeding Streets – more precisely with the way it expanded and contracted its boundaries, shapeshifting, forming temporary alliances, or suddenly retracting depending on the issues at hand. We have shown how this constitution in communication is contextual, meaning that it happened through a different set of relations each time. In line with Taylor and Van Every's understanding of the organisation as an object (2014), boundaries appeared to be discursive objects (evoked and invoked in different ways at different times, to either constitute or challenge what the organisation was) but these discursive objects gained a materiality through the communicational efforts needed to define them.

Moreover, perspective matters for how organisational boundaries are drawn. Artists actively involved in the Breeding Streets could discuss, or even argue, extensively about whether they present themselves as one organisation, or whether certain artistic products are authored by the separate 'streets', or by an individual artist. However, the visitor hardly noticed the difference between the various different-but-attached organisational units. For example, the footage of the film that was produced alongside the Diner Variété du Nord showed how weekly participants in the activities of the different streets are unaware of their attachment to Breeding Streets. It is therefore not surprising to find that the organisation's boundaries are elastic, because those doing the talking and listening may see this differently. Hence, elasticity may also be a question of positionality.

However, this does not mean that the organisation's boundaries can be stretched ad infinitum, depending on the actors' preferences. At the end of 2015, as anticipated, the formal organisation Breeding Streets ceased to exist and the coordinators and artists affiliated with the different streets continued their activities on their own. Some kept their name (Fashion Street and Theatre Street), but others took a different name (Colour Street became ILandArt). A question for further inquiry could thus be: to what extent can a platform (whether a formal organisation or not) stretch its boundaries to include whatever activities or actors are available, and for those activities and actors to still identify with it?

In the case of Breeding Streets, where no one was formally employed and the organisation was more a case of interconnected organisations (the separate streets), identification with a communicatively constituted organisational actor enabled interconnected decision-making (Ahrne, Brunsson & Seidl, 2016). After the discontinuation of the organisation Breeding Streets as it existed through 'textualization' (Smith, 2001), e.g. as registered in the local Chamber of Commerce, on its official webpage, and in annual reports, it was no longer possible to organise as Breeding Streets, and the remaining actors would instead speak of a collaboration between the remaining streets. Of course, this would still qualify as organising, and it has been argued that the absence of formal organisation allows for more effective collaboration between streets (Czarniawska, 2013). Nevertheless, in this case, it was precisely the 'thirdness' (Taylor & Van Every, 2011) of the organisation which enabled the attribution (Bencherki & Cooren, 2011) of actions to the organisational actor Breeding Streets, thereby making organising the event relatively easy.

Overall, our study contributes by documenting the elasticity of organisational boundaries and linking it explicitly to the role of communication in organising. When we highlight the key role played by communication in organising, and explore it in relation to organisational boundaries, we discover that these boundaries are fundamentally elastic. We have used the case of the Breeding Streets to suggest that elastic boundaries could be useful for the organisation, for example as it allowed the actors to identify as members when it suited their endeavours, while claiming another organisational membership (alone or with others) at other moments. While in other organisations, the rule of 'doing what is best for the organisation' sometimes means going against one's own interests, we have shown with Breeding Streets that the interest of the organisation really meant, in some instances, the interest of those who were enacting it at that moment – with consequences for the temporary constitution of the organisation itself. Moreover, if Dobusch and Schoeneborn (2015) have already emphasised the central role of identity claims in the practice of drawing boundaries, a further line of inquiry might be how the elasticity of organisational boundaries

pertains to organisational authority. Who is able to cast boundaries wide, or draw them in? Who may speak on behalf of the organisation and, as a result, define who belongs?

More generally, the elastic properties of organisational boundaries appear in full light when we explore the ontology of organisation from a communication-centred perspective, demonstrating once more the generativity of this lens when it comes to understanding organisation and organising. CCO investigates the ontology of the organisation, challenging the image of what an organisation typically is (Kuhn, 2017: 141). By drawing attention to the boundaries of the organisation, we begin to formulate some answers to that question, by showing that the 'same' organisation can 'look' very different in different instances. Breeding Streets presented a somewhat unique case in the sense that it did not act in a highly competitive market. Coming back to Santos' and Eisenhardt's typology (2005), the boundary conceptions of Breeding Streets mostly followed a logic of identification. It is therefore imaginable that the elasticity of boundaries is permitted, and effective, when this is done through different and quickly shifting dynamics of identification. Likewise, such elastic boundaries would work less well when legal matters prevented boundaries from shifting rapidly, as is the case in highly competitive markets (Santos & Eisenhardt 2005: 493).

Finally, in focussing on what can be considered as a fluid organisation, our study illustrates the relevance of exploring less formal forms of organising, which are especially prevalent in the context of artistic production. Breeding Streets may be a striking example of an organisation with highly elastic organisational boundaries, but this organisation is far from being an isolated case. In fact, conceptualising boundaries from a communication-centred perspective allows us to suggest that such elasticity is inherently part of the properties of organisations, and that such elasticity can be productive for action in all organised settings.

5

Conclusion

5.1 Summary, Contributions and Limitations of the Chapters

The three empirical essays in this dissertation have dealt with the question how organising between self-employed workers in the creative industries is shaped by material and discursive practices. The thesis has looked at emergent and ephemeral instances of organising in the creative industries in temporary buildings (Chapters 2 and 3) and in a temporary collective of artists and creative entrepreneurs (Chapter 4). As a result of these phenomenon-inspired case studies, discourse and materiality have been understood somewhat differently in each study. This raises the need to assess how each chapter answers this question in its own specific way. Furthermore, I aim to draw more general conclusions about the contributions to communication-centred perspectives on organisations and organising in general.

Chapter 2 provided a reflection on practices of self-organising and resistance, based on empirical material collected during ethnographic research among groups of creative workers in Amsterdam who were tenants in creative spaces which were temporarily subsidised by the city council of Amsterdam. It did so by looking at these practices through the lens of the political notions 'the common' and 'the multitude', to be situated in the autonomist literature. The study looked at how these concepts facilitated a political understanding of the self-organising practices among creative workers, thus reflecting on the performative effect of autonomist philosophy, while providing some empirical illustration for these concepts at the same time. Hence, the study can be read as an exercise in testing the relevance of political concepts

that were developed to understand the potential of organised collectives of freelance workers. A clear limitation of this endeavour is the fact that the literature on these political concepts does not theorise what the common should look like, making empirical identification very difficult. Nevertheless, the vignettes presented in Chapter 2 indicated that the multitude moves into a common when it organises itself around a shared endeavour. In summary, the findings of this chapter responded to the need, expressed by art theorists and researchers in the field of cultural studies (Hesmondhalgh, 2007; Valli, 2015), to investigate autonomist ideas empirically, as well as the call of scholars of organisations to extend social movement theories in order to better understand the links between resistance and organisation (McPhail, 2017; Mumby et al., 2017).

The second empirical study of the dissertation was conducted in the context of two of the creative spaces studied in Chapter 2. In this case, the focus of the study was not the constitution of the common, but rather the emergence of organising, a notion much more empirically rooted in research (e.g. Weick, 1979; Czarniawksa, 2008; 2009b). While the empirical setting and methodological approach of Chapters 2 and 3 largely overlapped, the latter took a much more fine-grained approach in terms of analysis. Chapter 2 discussed instances of resistance, mostly in the context of (semi-) public events, while Chapter 3 focused on the day-to-day activities that enabled and enlivened the professional activities that were carried out in these two spaces. Theoretically, Chapter 3 draws on current research on the ways in which organisations are interactionally constituted through discourse and communication (e.g. Taylor and Van Every, 2000; McPhee, 2004; Grant et al., 2005; Schoeneborn, 2011), and contributes to this literature by showing how space, defined as material assemblage, contributes to the emergence and endurance of organising.

The empirical material discussed in this chapter demonstrated that space provides endurance to organisational practices and, as such, constitutes creative spaces as organisations. In so doing, this chapter also contributes to the literature on organisational space by showing that, while space is relationally and practically constituted, it is also constitutive of organising practices and makes them endure. However, this study, although involving prolonged engagement with the field, entailed only two collectives. It provided an 'extreme case', in the sense that a community was emergent while commonly used tools for integration and socialisation, such as team building, task assignment, and meeting routines, were absent. Hence, it provided an opportunity to look at how space might have an impact. Further in-depth qualitative research could look at other processes of the co-constitution of space and organising, specifically in the context of new organisations, such as new teams, start-ups or labs. Further determination of the elements and circumstances that make space

participate in constitutive processes can help uncover exactly how space matters in organisational contexts.

Finally, Chapter 4 concerned the organising practices of an art organisation that was about to end its existence on paper. Breeding Streets – the name of the organisation–was embedded in or adjacent to other organisational entities, spread across dispersed locations, and encompassed members with various professional profiles, who explained its goals and tasks in very different terms. No one was formally employed by the organisation, yet many individuals were members of it; there were no headquarters, no office hours, not even a phone number to reach the organisation. Chapter 4 was mostly aimed at understanding this slightly baffling nature of Breeding Streets. Building on the CCO approach, the study proposed that if organisations are continuously performed, communicatively, then so must their boundaries. This has led me to suggest that organisational boundaries present an elasticity that may be greater than is usually recognised. To explore this idea of elasticity, I presented vignettes taken from the ethnographic study of Breeding Streets. Taken together, these vignettes showed that because of their elasticity, organisational boundaries enabled the organisation, at different times to host other organisations, to explicitly include people as its members sometimes, while excluding them in other instances, and to isolate or unite parts of the organisation when this was strategically useful.

Chapter 4 contributes to the field of organisation studies by documenting the elasticity of organisational boundaries and linking it explicitly to the constitutive role of communication in organising. When we highlight the key role played by communication in organising, and explore it in relation to organisational boundaries, we discover that these boundaries are fundamentally elastic. It is a first exploration of the notion of boundaries, if we take the CCO-premise that boundaries are communicatively constituted, seriously. As any qualitative case study, it is limited by the specificity of the empirical setting. Further research is needed to further examine the communicative constitution of organisational boundaries in different organisational settings.

5.2 Overall Contribution and Transferability

Taken together, this dissertation contributes to the field of organisation studies by offering a view of organisations as emergent, and constituted through discursive and material practices, while at the same time recognising that in some of the cases discussed in the chapters, organisational thirdness (Taylor & Van Every, 2011) did emerge. Overlooking the total sum of the three empirical essays, one question that emerges is to what extent phenomena such as spaces where independent

workers interact and collaborate, or organisations that consist mainly of freelancers and volunteers, as was the case with Breeding Streets, can count as organisations, and whether or not they might be considered new types or forms of organisations.

While the literature on organisational forms has argued that the emergence of genuinely new forms of organisations is quite rare (Puranam, Alexy, & Reitzig, 2014; Palmer, Benveniste, & Dunford, 2007), I would suggest that studying such social collectives as those presented in the chapters *as organisational*, offers an avenue to theorise about the transferability of the findings. Specifically, CCO research provides some useful tools to identify those processes constitutive of organising and organisations, and may therefore help in developing a proposition from the findings that can apply to other settings as well. In this section, I will outline several of the concepts and theories developed in CCO research in order to then show how my findings help refine these ideas. I will also point out avenues for further research.

McPhee and Zaug (2009) have suggested that organisations engage in four flows: membership negotiation, organisational self-structuring, activity coordination, and institutional positioning. Relying on this view, Sillince (2010) added that organisations, in contrast to networks or associations, engage in rhetoric that emphasises context, switches perspectives, and creates some form of consistency and purpose. Coming from a slightly different angle, Schoeneborn and Dobusch (2015) have proposed the notion of organisationality, which is detectable when instances of interconnected decision-making are attributed to an emerging organisational actor or entity that is said to do certain things. They in turn have drawn on the concept of partial organisation (Ahrne & Brunsson, 2011; Ahrne, Brunsson, & Seidl, 2016; Apelt et al., 2017; Ahrne, Brunsson, & Seidl, 2017). Partial organisation was developed to suggest that certain types of social order can be more or less organisational. Such partial organisations can display one or more of the following five elements: membership, rules, hierarchies, monitoring and sanctions (Apelt et al., 2017). Finally, Bencherki and Cooren speak about attribution and appropriation as ways to understand how human actors attribute actions to organisations, and how actions are appropriated by organisations (e.g. 'the company is hiring').

Throughout the dissertation, I have borrowed from this research the understanding that collectives, networks, or other groups of independent-yet-interconnected workers can be more or less organisational, and have focused on the potential emergence of an organisational identity or actor, which Taylor and Van Every refer to as the emergence of thirdness (2011). Such organisation – partial or not -was certainly the case in Chapter 3, where people started to identify with the chicken and coordinate among themselves to move to a new warehouse, and in Chapter 4, where Breeding

Streets was attributed various actions, and an evolving identity, depending on strategic needs. There was some organisationality or partial organisation to be detected in Chapter 2, where moments of resistance seemed to give way to organising when discussing a potential new organisational identity (the Fenix of Chapter 3) and trying to set up the cooperative Open ACTA. However, in both of these instances, there was no organisational actor to which actions or purpose could be attributed (Bencherki & Cooren, 2011), and all purposeful rhetoric (Sillince, 2010) remained in the realm of a 'we'.

Discussing the extent to which organisations have emerged in these different chapters, also brings up the question of what it is such forms of organising must do. Is it enough to provide a pleasant work environment, or do these flexible and low-threshold forms of collectivity risk losing the benefits of scale when they do not solidify or endure? The results of this dissertation point in different ways. On the one hand, ad-hoc types of solidarity such as the ones discussed in Chapter 2 are fragile, and although the autonomist fantasy seems promising in that it provides the tools to celebrate pluralism, the examples discussed cannot endure without some sort of institutional support. On the other hand, the case of the Breeding Streets shows the advantages of the nimble and shape-shifting ways of organising that are typical for the creative industries, by showing how ambiguity about the organisation's boundaries allowed for strategic manoeuvring.

The ambiguity of such organisational forms might be found in other industries too. For example, companies in the sharing economy display similar forms of shape-shifting, claiming strong identities on the one hand while refusing to perceive of its contractors as full members on the other. Elastic boundaries, plural identities, and ambiguity in the degree of their organisationality, could well be some of the main features of such companies. And while the boundaries of organisations are often subject to legal and financial mechanisms, I have shown that it is through language that they are continuously drawn, redrawn and challenged. Although the organisational boundaries in such industries may be less elastic, or less dynamic, drawing attention to the ambiguity of language in boundary-drawing may help reveal mechanisms of in- and exclusion, and strategic manoeuvring, in these settings as well.

5.3 Towards A Framework of Selective Appropriation and Endurance

In summary, all chapters have focused on groups of independent workers who had some organisationality (Dobusch & Schoeneborn, 2015), whether through coordinating tasks, or finding a common identity that transcended the group identity. Hence, taking all chapters together also lends itself to developing a discussion about the differences between organising and the organisation. As detailed in the previous sections and chapters, the CCO approach (Blaschke, Schoeneborn, & Seidl, 2012; Schoeneborn et al., 2014) sees organising and organisation as outcomes of collective and social processes, yet also accounts for the fact that there often exists something like an organisational actor that can act, or rather make others act, on its behalf.

With regard to the question of the nature of such an organisational actor, Nicotera proposes to think of the organisation as an 'entitative being', which, 'though it emerges from a human collective, is itself a nonhuman' (2013: 68). She argues that entitative beings transcend the sum of their parts (hence, the organisation is not just the sum of its members), but are also distinguishable entities (which nevertheless always needs to be maintained in practice). In her view, entitative beings are attributed agency, attitude, and authority (ibid: 69). According to Nicotera, CCO research needs to theorise the move from a collective of individuals to an entitative being (the organisation), in order to understand the ontological status of what she describes as the organisation-as-entity, or the transition from 'we' to 'it', in other words from the collective to the organisation. She argues that a collective agent (we) is not necessarily an organisation (it), but an organisation (it) must necessarily be a collective agent (we). In other words, a sense of collectivity must precede the birth of an organisation-as-entity: there has to be a 'we' before there can be an 'it' (2013: 76).

This move from we to it implies some sort of timeline, a temporal element which is also present in the way Dobusch and Schoeneborn (2015) tracked the organisationality of an online collective. These concepts invite the question of what it is entitative beings or organisational collectives must do. For one, must they last in order to be effective? Or more broadly, in the settings studied, when does such an emerging organisation become *adequate*? What must it do to support the aims of the individuals involved in its constitution, and how does it prevent itself from becoming an obstacle to organising (Czarniawska, 2013)?

Looking again at the findings in the different studies, it must be concluded that Chapter 2 is concerned with some degree of organisationality (Dobusch & Schoeneborn, 2015). The idea of the common, although not present in all snapshots

presented, could arguably be said to entail the potential of an organised collective, a virtual 'it'. Nevertheless, it is clear that in the empirical material presented, no one acted on behalf of a thirdness (Taylor & Van Every, 2011). Any representation always remained in the realm of a 'we': the artists. Unions, political parties, and companies all have spokespeople who ventriloquize (Cooren & Bencherki, 2011) the organisation. Although autonomist philosophy is characterised by a lack of concrete guidelines as to how to the multitude should organise itself, theorists in this tradition are consistent in their scepticism - or downward rejection - of institutions and large scale organisations.

The move 'from we to it' is however visible in the case of Chapter 3, where the organisation Fenix emerged from a 'we' of tenants who wanted to stick together. Although it took a while before any thirdness could be observed, the group of artists decided to stick together. They came up with a name, registered a legal entity and appointed several of its members to act on its behalf for certain tasks, and made claims about the identity of their organisation.[14] Constituting an entity has given them the ability to move and act. Claiming that certain things were needed to run the organisation help members move beyond differing opinions between individuals and claim authority. For instance, a statement such as 'Fenix needs to attract new tenants' is met with much more acceptance than an individual's 'I think we should find new people', while it is of course clear that individuals are needed in order to vocalise and carry out what the organisation needs (Bencherki & Cooren, 2011).

In the situation of these creative spaces, it matters that their organisationality (Dobusch & Schoeneborn, 2015) neither incorporates, nor depends on, the individuals' artistic work. Although artistic collaborations did happen and were encouraged in these spaces, the final responsibility of developing, producing, and disseminating creative work still lies with the individual artist (or with residing artist duos, in some cases). This allows for some kind of 'it' to emerge, without this obstructing the artistic organising that was attributed to individuals or smaller entitative beings residing in these spaces.

Looking at Chapter 4, it is clear that organisational entities can indeed also obstruct organising (Czarniawska, 2013). On the one hand, the entity 'Breeding Streets' allowed the affiliated individuals to do certain things. Claiming that certain things had to go the way they had because the organisation Breeding Streets had to be showcased, was an effective argument in pulling together people with diverging opinions, interests, and day-to-day routines. The realities of the different venues, or 'streets',

[14] See also the organisation's new website: www.broedplaatsfenix.nl

and affiliated artists and artist duos could often be put aside for the sake of working towards a public event with time pressure and limited resources. However, as detailed in the chapter, the interests of other organisational entities that were strongly connected to the Breeding Streets because they hired the same people, claimed the same artistic content and used the same spaces, were often brought into these deliberative processes. Finally, to complicate matters even further, although all artists accepted that the organisation of the artistic event served the interests of all people involved, sometimes these organisational entities were obstacles in achieving that goal. A persisting conflict between two of the 'streets', resulting from conflicting strategic goals of these two separate organisational entities in terms of branding and access to funding, was more a result of solidified 'Golems' (Czarniawska, 2009) than it was an actual conflict between the individual artists, illustrating once again how organisations can get in the way of organising (Czarniawska, 2013).

Coming back to Taylor's argument that the organisation is both a corporate legal person and one of the many voices in a 'discursive geography' (2011: 1273), it is clear that at some points, the organisation, understood as an entitative being (Nicotera, 2013), indeed has authority, while at other points, it is just one of the many voices fighting for a prominent place on the map. Since it has already been shown that the agency of organisations is hybrid (Cooren, 2006), in the sense that organisations always need other things to help them act, it follows that other defining elements in the constitution of organisations, such as attribution and appropriation (Bencherki & Cooren, 2011), are also hybrid, or better yet: selective.

In the case of network-like organisations such as Breeding Steets, or groups of artists sharing and running a building, the human actors engage in some form of branding, and affirm their own membership from time to time. Such activities match elements of McPhee and Zaug's four flows (2009) and Dobusch and Schoeneborn's organisationality (2015), and these activities are easily attributed to the organisation. If the affiliated artists stage an event, it is Fenix, or Breeding Streets, that appropriates the work that goes into making the event happen. Nevertheless, it is also very clear that the artistic or creative content that is produced by the artists, will never be fully attributed to this thirdness (Taylor & Van Every, 2011). This may seem unsurprising, given that authorship and the idea of individual genius still are dominant features of the arts, but the creative industries are far from exempt from this type of appropriation. Theatre companies, advertising agencies and music groups, although heavily reliant on individual talent, all excel in attributing creative and artistic actions to the organisational actor they are. And in fashion companies, design firms, and contemporary dance groups, organised creative production is often attributed to an individual author, whose name comes to signify the organisation. However, it seems that

the organisational settings discussed in this dissertation that manage to endure in different ways, succeeded in fact partly because they made no attempt to appropriate the artistic and creative content their members produce. Breeding Streets is a case in point: no matter how much it tried to claim its existence as an entitative being during the Diner Variété du Nord, the names of individual artists were constantly presented too, and the only person comfortable enough to speak on behalf of the organisation, was a relative outsider.

Therefore, I would argue that the organising and resulting emergent organisationality in the settings discussed, relies on what could be referred to as selective appropriation. Countering the widely-held idea that organisations must have a clear identity, or display unity in how they presents themselves to the outside world, the organising and organisations discussed in this dissertation all rely on selective modes of appropriation. Some actions are appropriated by one of the organisational entities (Fenix, the Breeding Streets, or one of the separate venues of the Breeding Streets) while other actions are appropriated by the artists, volunteers, or creative workers. This seems to allow for a flexible mode of constituting an organisation, that can be deviated from if needed, as if the directionality of the 'from we to it' can be reversed from time to time. Often this reversal happens alongside processes of membership coordination or institutional positioning, for example when artists decided to showcase their work as an individual artist, while also aligning with, and offering their work through, the Open ACTA platform. In the case of Breeding Streets, the discontinuation of the legal entity Breeding Streets caused a reversal from 'it' to 'we', although the 'it' is still invoked from time to time when the previously affiliated artists use the name of the now defunct organisational it to signal their professionalism and social capital on funding applications and other strategic communication. I therefore theorise that a selective type of appropriation may positively affect the endurance of such flexible types of organisations. While longitudinal studies would be needed to further explore this proposition, the material presented in this dissertation does point in that direction. The table presented below shows how the endurance of the organised collective was affected by the types of actions that were appropriated by the organisation.

Chapter	2	3	4
Organised collective	Open ACTA; Beehives tenants	ACTA; Fenix	Breeding Streets; different venues
Appropriated…	Administrative and managerial tasks involved in keeping collective going	Incidental artistic activities or products made in the context of events.	Almost all artistic activities or products made in the context of Breeding Streets
Possible relationship to endurance?	Not enough 'natural' convergence between Open ACTA members to legitimise efforts to keep collective going. Beehives could no longer appropriate their tenants' efforts due to conflict.	Material space allows for ways to identify with collective without sacrificing individual identity. Constituting legal entity Fenix afforded members authority.	Stretchable limits of Breeding Streets allow formerly affiliated artists, volunteers and creative workers to continue new activities while referring to the old name.

Table 5: Selective Appropriation and Endurance Across the Chapters.

5.4. Avenues for Further Research

This dissertation has looked at independent workers in the creative industries while largely leaving aside the academic field of entrepreneurship. Although much has been written about entrepreneurship in the creative and cultural industries (Lampel, Lant & Shamsie, 2000; Reid & Karambayya, 2009; Townley & Beech, 2010; Bhansing, Leenders, & Wijnberg, 2012), often respondents in the empirical settings used for this thesis felt uneasy with the term entrepreneurship. Staying close to informants' terms for as long as possible, before moving on to theoretical constructs and concepts, is common practice in qualitative research in organisation studies (Gioia, Corley, & Hamilton, 2012), and words such as freelancers, independent workers, or artists are used whenever the informants did so themselves.

At the same time, it can be argued that the creative sector in fact consists of many entrepreneurs, since there does not need to be a formal distinction between self-employed workers, freelancers, and entrepreneurs. On an administrative and fiscal level, self-employed workers are mostly treated as business owners. Furthermore, one of the classic and widely held definitions of entrepreneurship is 'the pursuit of opportunity beyond resources controlled' (Stevenson, 1983; Gartner & Baker, 2010), and this applies to the self-employed artist who writes project plans in her spare time, or the designer who creates a web shop. In the Netherlands, in addition to many other countries, the artistic professions – artists, designers, musicians, architects – have long since worked as freelancers or individual entrepreneurs (Abbing, 2002; Gielen, 2015). More recently, others working in the production and organisation of

cultural goods are increasingly self-employed as well (Ross, 2009; McRobbie, 2015). Since entrepreneurship is both a research field and a phenomenon, further research could focus on how exactly the organising discussed in this dissertation relates to the academic study of entrepreneurship in the context of creative workers. Despite the knowledge that social capital is vital in generating high-standard creative outcomes (Becker, 1984; Sawyer & Dezutter, 2009), the romantic image of the individual creative genius seems hard to shake off (Heinich, 1993).

In studying the organising practices between individual creative professionals, the focus often went to the tasks they had to perform that were related to sharing a building, or working in the same open space. Chapter 4 did follow the making of an artistic event, however most of the artistic content of the event had been created before, making this more a case of organising previously produced artistic goods. Future research could look more precisely at how, in such ephemeral organisational contexts, these organising practices relate to the creative and entrepreneurial process itself.

This would also provide opportunities to build on current research connecting entrepreneurship to process theory (Helin et al., 2014), which, much like CCO research, sees processes as the substance the world is made of (Langley et al., 2013). Entrepreneurship scholars have indeed recently turned to various thinkers in this tradition in order to better understand the dynamic nature of entrepreneurship, with its rapid and constant change, creation, and invention (Hjorth, Holt, & Steyaert, 2015).

Taking on a processual view not just of organising, as I have done in this dissertation, but of entrepreneurship too, means that creative products, inventions, or business ventures could be understood as temporary manifestations of a process of becoming, inseparably tangled up with other flows, movements, and forces. Even without fully embracing the philosophical claims of process philosophy, its language may provide a sophisticated tool to capture the practices of entrepreneurship, which is, after all, 'a field concerned with growth and decay, […] with alertness to the differences that might make a difference, with risky ventures that are themselves an ad-venture, with maturing, animating or transforming, with creativity and with disclosing that which is not yet fully known' (Hjorth, Holt, & Steyaert, 2015: 600).

Finally, studying the organisation of creative work through the lens of selective appropriation may contribute to better knowledge of both entrepreneurship, or entrepreneuring (Johannisson, 2011), and the communicative view of organising. It may very well be that the extent to which a creative act or product can be appropriated by an organisational entity, or the extent to which the authors of said creative product can prevent this from happening, relates to the very essence of entrepreneurship.

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List of Interviews Used in Chapter 3

I1 male furniture designer from the Netherlands, affiliated with Fenix.
I2 female multimedia artist from the Netherlands, affiliated with ACTA.
I3 male multimedia and performance artist from Taiwan, affiliated with ACTA.
I4 female visual artist from Poland, affiliated with ACTA.
I5 male architect from Russia, affiliated with ACTA.

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Although larger firms have several advantages when it comes to operating in competitive markets, western economies have a growing number of one-person firms or individual entrepreneurs. This creates new relevance for the question of how self-employed workers can organise themselves in order to capture some of the benefits that come with being part of an organisation. This dissertation looks at this question by using three qualitative case studies, each zooming in on a particular setting where self-employed workers share space and work together. It employs a practice-based approach to organising and borrows from literature on labour in the creative and cultural industries across various disciplines, such as sociology, anthropology, and management.

The main theoretical approach adopted in this dissertation sees organisations as temporary results of communicative practices. Such practices are explored in the context of two creative spaces and a network-like organisation of community artists in Amsterdam. Countering the widely-held idea that organisations must have a clear identity, or display unity in how they present themselves to the outside world, it is argued that the organising and organisations discussed in this dissertation all rely on selective modes of appropriation. This term is put forward to capture the fact that the organisations and the modes of organising discussed, make no attempt to appropriate the artistic and creative content their members produce. It is theorised that this allows for flexible modes of membership negotiation and institutional positioning, which better serves the members' fluctuating strategic needs.

Boukje Cnossen (1987) obtained a Bachelor's degree (BA) in Religious Studies (BA) from the University of Amsterdam in 2009, with an honours certificate in Art & Research, and a Master of Research (MRes) in Humanities & Cultural Studies from Birkbeck College, University of London (United Kingdom), in 2011. Between 2012 and 2013, she worked as a researcher for the Creative Industries Research Centre Amsterdam at the University of Amsterdam. She started a PhD at Tilburg University in September 2013. As of February 2018, February 2018, Boukje will join Leuphana University Lüneburg (Germany) as a postdoctoral researcher, where she will continue to study artistic organisations.

ISBN: 978 90 5668 545 4

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